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ABSTRACT

In order to develop a profile of the readership served by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), and to identify readers' interests and concerns as an aid to future program planning, a users survey was conducted during the autumn of 1979. After a questionnaire was designed and tested, NLS members were surveyed by mail, or by phone when necessary. In December of 1979 a supplemental questionnaire was sent to regional and sub-regional libraries in the NLS network. The major findings of the surveys related to user characteristics, use of library service, equipment use, reading materials, user assessment of library services, and the perspectives provided by network libraries. The recommended actions to be taken based on the survey results include: a campaign to attract non-white, less educated, and low income readers to NLS; a review of the process by which readers are introduced to NLS; and the development of a method for obtaining input from readers on a regular basis. The survey findings are presented in 83 tables, and copies of the user and network library surveys are provided as appendices. (JL)

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READERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS & ATTITUDES

Service to Blind & Physically Handicapped Users

Prepared by the Public Sector Research Group
of Market Facts, Inc., Washington, D.C.

for

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for the Blind and
Physically Handicapped
The Library of Congress
Washington, D.C. 20542

September 30, 1981

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The findings reported herein are based on a survey of users of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) conducted during September and October, 1979. The objectives of the survey were to develop a profile of the NLS readership and to aid NLS in future program planning by identifying readers' interests and concerns. The study was designed to determine the reading interests, library usage patterns, experiences with and attitudes toward reading materials and equipment, and general level of satisfaction of various subgroups of readers as well as of the general readership.

The program administered by the Library of Congress consists of a central federal unit and a network of regional and subregional libraries. The federal unit produces materials and equipment and provides administrative coordination. The regional and subregional libraries distribute materials to users in their geographic areas.

METHODOLOGY

Developmental Research

Before the questionnaire was designed, interviews were conducted with library staff and patrons. Lengthy discussions were held with library staff at two regional libraries. In-depth , one-to-one interviews were conducted with four library users, two of whom were bedridden or institutionalized. In addition, the regional librarian at each of these two libraries arranged a meeting of users (eight at one library and ten at the other) where the project director led an informal discussion of issues of concern to NLS users. Based on the issues which emerged through this qualitative research and with input from representatives of virtually all sections of NLS, a draft questionnaire was developed.

Pretesting

A sample of 140 names was compiled from the patron lists of four regional libraries. The printed questionnaire was mailed to 100 of these users; half of the mailings included a postcard which offered respondents the option of being interviewed by telephone. Attempts were made to interview the other 40 patrons by telephone.

Fifty-seven interviews were completed, 38 by mail and 19 by telephone. Pretest results indicated that:

- The questionnaire content was basically sound but minor improvements were needed.
- The regional library lists contained inaccuracies (wrong addresses or phone numbers, inclusion of deceased users).

- Fifty-two of the 53 current library users who completed pretest interviews received either Talking Book Topics (TBT) or Braille Book Review (BBR), bi-monthly publications which describe reading materials available to NLS patrons.

User Survey Execution

Based on the pretest findings and discussions with regional librarians, it was decided to draw the survey sample from the TBT and BBR subscription lists. Questionnaires were mailed to 10,306 sample members in September, 1979. Three weeks later two-part postcards were mailed to nonrespondents to remind them to return their completed questionnaires. Respondents could use these postcards to request a replacement questionnaire (300 did) or a telephone interview (427 did).

A total of 4,415 interviews were completed for a response rate of 44 percent. Responses from the TBT sample and the BBR samples were analyzed separately.

Network Library Survey Execution

In December, 1979, a supplemental questionnaire was mailed to 150 regional and subregional libraries in the NLS network. The findings in this report are based on a total sample of 141 returned questionnaires.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Findings are reported under the headings of user characteristics, use of library service, equipment use, reading materials, users' assessments of library service, use of regional and subregional libraries, and Network Library Survey findings.

User Characteristics

User characteristics are displayed in Tables 6 and 7. Visual handicaps alone account for nearly two-thirds of the TBT sample's disabilities; about 7 percent of users have only a physical handicap, and about 28 percent have multiple handicaps. In general, the NLS readership consists of persons who are older than the U.S. population as a whole (50 percent of TBT users are over the age of 65). More females (57%) than males (43%) are NLS users, and about 93 percent of the readership is white. A majority of users (66% of the TBT sample) are retired or unemployed, and they tend to have limited annual incomes despite high levels of educational attainment. Most (approximately 70%) NLS users live with friends or family, although more than one-fifth live alone and slightly less than 10 percent live in institutions.

The braille readership, which comprises approximately 5 percent of NLS users, has somewhat different characteristics from the general readership. Braille readers tend to be younger (54% are under age 45) and to have completed more years of education. They are more likely to be employed or to be students and are less likely to have physical handicaps. Braille readers include more long-term NLS users than are found among the TBT readership.

Use of Library Service

Only readers who had used NLS materials during the preceding year were considered eligible for the survey. The 498 respondents who returned the questionnaire but had not used the service were asked why; 384 readers gave one or more reasons. The most common reason, given by 22% was that the respondent had not had time to use the service. Eleven percent indicated they had not received materials requested, and about 5 percent expressed general dissatisfaction with the service. Among those who are currently using materials, 12 percent have used NLS for less than one year, while 21 percent have been users for at least 10 years. Thirty-seven percent of users first learned of the NLS from friends and relatives. In addition, many users first learned of NLS through a school, library, or other organization serving the blind or handicapped (35%). Few users first heard of NLS from radio, TV, or print media (less than 4%).

Users' contact with their regional and subregional libraries is generally limited to telephone and written communication. A majority (about 65%) receive a newsletter, and nearly all (95%) find it useful. Only 14 percent of users have ever visited their library in person. Two-thirds of those who have not done so said this was because the library was too far from their home. More users of subregional libraries (20%) reported visiting their library than did regional users (12%).

Equipment Use

While talking book record players are used by nine out of ten respondents, more than half of the readers use both a record player and a cassette player. Only one out of ten users report access to cassette players only. Older readers are less likely to use cassette players (48% of those aged 80 and older) and tend to report more problems with these machines when they do use them (38% of those aged 80 and older report difficulties in reading the cassette label; 16% have problems finding the right side of the cassette; and 14% have difficulties figuring out the controls).

In general, readers do not appear to have major problems in operating equipment. Reading labels on both records and cassettes is the most frequent problem; 21 percent of the TBT sample report a problem reading record labels and 18 percent report a problem reading cassette labels. In addition, readers report problems associated with the cassettes themselves, particularly receiving unwound tapes and difficulties in finding the right side of the cassette. Equipment features rated as very important by more than half of all readers are automatic stops and portability of machines. Portability is especially important to respondents between the ages of 10 and 64.

Reading Materials

Talking books on records are used very often by 67 percent of TBT respondents. Among readers under age 65, cassettes are used more often. About four out of ten TBT respondents report using magazines on records. This percentage is higher for older readers (about 45% among those 45 and older). Overall, about 4 percent report reading braille books or magazines. The most frequently used method of selecting reading material is by reading the one-line

description on the print checklist form; 43 percent of the TBT sample report that they use this method very often. Recorded Talking Book Topics is also used regularly (very often by 25%), as is the large print edition of this publication (very often by 32%). Braille readers are, of course, more likely to order from the Braille Book Review; 47 percent of the BBR sample use the braille edition of BBR very often.

Readers were asked three questions about their experiences in ordering reading materials - how often they like the library to select books for them, how often their orders are filled quickly, and how often materials they order are not available. Thirty-four percent never like the library to make book selections and another 14 percent seldom desire this service. Eighty-six percent report their book orders are often or sometimes filled quickly. Readers are less pleased with the availability of ordered materials than with the speed with which orders are filled; 49 percent report that ordered reading materials are often or sometimes not available.

Respondents' reading interests (Table 27) are diverse. Overall, bestsellers, historical fiction, humor, and biography were each rated as very important by at least 40 percent of readers.

While 27 percent of readers prefer male narrators, 71 percent indicate either no preference or that their preference depends on the subject of the book. Attitudes toward book content and narration vary with respondents' ages. Older readers tend to prefer male narrators and narrators without regional accents. In addition, they are more likely to object to fiction books which include strong language or explicit descriptions of sex. While 28 percent of the total TBT sample prefer that explicit descriptions of sex never appear in fiction, 47 percent of those aged 80 and older feel this way. No questions were asked about explicit descriptions of sex in nonfiction.

Only one out of every four users surveyed is aware of the NLS music service. The longer readers have used the NLS, the more likely they are to be aware of this service. About 10 percent of readers surveyed express an interest in receiving non-English materials, with Spanish being the most desired language.

Users' Assessments of Library Service

Readers express a high degree of satisfaction with the service provided by their regional or subregional libraries. About 60 percent rate the service excellent and another 32 percent rate the service good. Only 2 percent provide a poor rating. Users between the ages of 15 and 44 are less likely to give the service an excellent rating (48% do so) than are readers of other ages. Other reader characteristics associated with fewer excellent ratings are:

- o can read braille
- o institutionalized
- o male
- o employed

Most comments made by readers were positive although some suggestions were made regarding a desire for expanded book selection, equipment improvements, and improvements in the shipping of materials.

While few readers are dissatisfied overall, those who do give fair or poor ratings also express dissatisfaction with specific aspects of the services they receive from their library. Users who give fair or poor ratings also tend to:

- Use talking books less frequently
- Report more problems such as missing discs or cassettes or that ordered material is unavailable
- Are less likely to report that orders are filled quickly
- Do not like the library to select books for them them.

Table 32 summarizes these differences.

Use of Regional and Subregional Libraries

Table 35 presents comparisons between users of regional and subregional libraries on equipment usage, service usage, and satisfaction. More users of subregional libraries (20%) report visiting their library in person than do users of regional libraries (12%). Sixty-eight percent of users of subregionals rate the service provided by their library as excellent as compared to 56 percent of users of regional libraries. More users of subregionals (70%) report that their orders for books are filled quickly than do users of regional libraries (60%).

Network Library Survey Findings

Librarians report several types of special activities which they undertake to serve such groups as the learning disabled and the temporarily physically handicapped. The major activities in these areas involve contact with groups and organizations serving these populations. In addition, libraries work with local media to publicize the service.

Librarians indicate that few readers visit the libraries in person. Nearly two-thirds of the librarians report that no more than ten patrons visit the library in an average week. Like the readers themselves, librarians feel that distance and transportation problems account for this low level of personal contact. Again, librarians agree with readers that friends and relatives are the primary source of initial information about NLS.

Activities carried out most often to introduce new patrons to the NLS are welcoming letters and information/ catalogs sent by mail. Some librarians report that new patrons are contacted by telephone or in person. About half of the librarians surveyed said that new patrons are sometimes or often given personal instructions in machine operation.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The data in this report suggest recommendations for actions which can be expected to improve the reading experiences of the population with print limitations. Suggestions are divided into those for the NLS central unit, responsible for producing materials and coordinating activities, and those for the network libraries, responsible for identification of users and distribution of materials.

Recommendations for NLS

- Develop a campaign to attract non-white, less educated, and low-income readers to the NLS.

Comparison of the characteristics of respondents in this survey with the findings of the non-user survey indicates that the library has been less effective in reaching non-whites, readers with less education, and readers from low-income households. In part, this can be explained by a lower degree of awareness of the NLS among these groups. While 38 percent of whites first learned of the library through friends or relatives, only 17 percent of non-white users learned of the NLS In this manner. Thus, other means must be found for reaching this population.

Analysis of the attitudes and experiences of current users with these characteristics suggests that the following activities would be needed in any effective campaign:

- Determine reading interests of these readers
- Produce more books on the topics of interest to these readers

- Publicize the wide range of topics available
- Inform potential readers that knowledge of braille is not needed
- Encourage additional distribution of information through organizations which serve the blind and physically handicapped

Blacks and readers with relatively less education are more likely than other readers to report a desire for a greater variety of topics. Seventeen percent of black respondents and 20 percent of Hispanics who have not used books from the NLS in the past year give lack of interest in the available topics as their reason. To attract and keep these readers, NLS needs to determine the topics desired, have them produced, and then publicize their availability.

Another 17 percent of black respondents and 20 percent of Hispanics who have not used books from the NLS in the past year give inability to read braille as their reason. Consistent with this finding, more black than white current readers are able to read braille. Apparently, there is some confusion among potential black NLS users about the kinds of reading materials available. Information aimed at these users which describes the program should make it clear that the ability to read braille is not necessary.

Most current non-white readers first learned of the library through organizations which serve the blind or physically handicapped. It appears that these organizations are effective in reaching non-white readers. Thus, their efforts should be encouraged and supported by NLS.

- Review and improve the process by which new readers are introduced to NLS

Several survey findings suggest that the process by which new readers are introduced to NLS can stand improvements. First, only one in four readers is aware that music can be ordered from NLS. Awareness of the music service is directly related to the number of years a reader has been using the library. Certain problems--i.e. reading record labels, finding the beginning of a record, and finding the correct side of the cassette--also occur more frequently for new users than for readers who have used the library for many years. In addition, reader comments suggest that there are users who are not aware of whom to contact when equipment repairs are needed or difficulties occur. Finally, librarians indicate that readers use a variety of methods to identify defective materials.

While the occurrence of problems is rare, improvements in the information given to new readers might lead to even further reductions. Although network libraries have responsibility for introducing new patrons to NLS, it would be more efficient if the federal unit were to review the methods and introductory materials currently used by the network libraries, revise these as needed, and make the new materials available to all network libraries.

The following topics should be included in such an introductory packet:

- Obtaining equipment
- Operating equipment
  - Avoiding problems with talking book record players
  - Avoiding problems with cassette players

- o What to do when equipment breaks
- o Ordering materials
  - Topics available
  - Talking Book Topics
  - Braille Book Review
- o How to identify defective materials
- o Special materials available
  - Music service
  - Books in foreign languages
  - Newsletters
- o Communicating with your library
  - How to request new materials

o Establish and publicize throughout the network explicit service objectives

In this report, we present data on the frequency and kinds of problems experienced by users and readers' attitudes toward the availability of materials, the speed with which orders are filled, and so forth. Although the absolute frequency of reported problems is low, only NLS policy-makers can decide what level is acceptable.

Given the financial and staffing constraints which network libraries face, some problems are inevitable. Precise objectives regarding service acceptable levels of problems are needed.

The American Library Association (ALA) has recently developed and published new standards for the established network of libraries for the blind and psysically handicapped. These standards provide a context for interpreting the findings of this survey and for designing future user sur-

veys. We would encourage NLS to continue to refine these standards. Wherever possible, precise measurable objectives should be specified. The new standards are very precise regarding expectations for circulation of materials: for example, all returned materials shall be inspected and available for use within one work day and responses to user requests, whether positive or negative, shall be made within two work days. Additional precision regarding quality control objectives would be useful.

o Develop disc and cassette labels which are easier to read

More than one out of every three readers aged 80 and older are often unable to read the labels on discs and cassettes. Efforts should therefore be directed to improve the labeling process through changes in type, size and/or label position. Discussions with readers who are frequently frustrated by the current labels can identify the features which need to be changed.

It would be wise to test the revised labels before they are widely introduced. If funds permit, labels in the new and current formats should be presented to a sample of readers who experience problems reading the current labels to assess whether the proposed changes result in less difficulty for these users.

Only 2 percent of the librarians surveyed mentioned poorly positioned or hard to read labels as a serious problem. Apparently, patrons who experience this frustration do not inform their libraries.

o Support mechanical improvements in cassette players

Improvements in the controls of cassette players would directly help physically handicapped readers. In spite of the fact that they use cassette players more frequently than

do other users, physically handicapped respondents report that they often find it too strenuous to operate cassette controls.

Older readers, regardless of handicap, also experience difficulties operating cassette players. We note that NLS is currently supporting the development of a much simplified cassette player. NLS has also designed extension levers which can be attached to a cassette player to enable physically handicapped readers to operate these machines more easily. These improvements can be expected to increase the reading pleasure of readers who are elderly and/or physically handicapped.

o Consider the subject matter and likely audience for a book which is being recorded when its narrator is selected

While 27 percent of respondents always prefer a male narrator, 67 percent report that their preference for a male or female narrator depends on the subject of the book. In general, NLS should use a narrator whose sex is appropriate to the subject matter of the book being recorded.

Older readers and readers with hearing impairments regardless of age are more likely than other respondents to prefer male narrators. These respondents also express a desire for a straightforward narration; that is, they dislike the use of different voices or accents for different characters. Possibly a male narrator who delivers a straightforward reading is more easily understood by these subgroups.

NLS should assess the likely audience for each new book to be recorded. Books, such as biographies, which are likely to be popular among those aged 80 and older, should be narrated by a male who does not use different voices or accents.

o Inform readers when there is strong language or explicit description of sex in books

The issue of strong language and explicit discriptions of sex in fiction is a difficult area. In response to an openended question on problems in book selection, sex or strong language is the most frequent problem reported by librarians. In the user survey, approximately 30 percent of respondents, and higher percentages of older readers, feel that such material should never be included in fiction. Other readers, however, wish to exercise their own judgment regarding the content of books they read.

Clearly, censorship is inappropriate for a public library program. An acceptable alternative is to include a brief description of content at the beginning of each recorded book, and, in fact, a large majority of NLS users report they would like such annotations. Respondent comments stress that annotations can be useful, particularly in weeding out objectionable books. NLS currently records a book jacket blurb at the beginning of each recorded book. This could be expanded to include information about the language and sexual content of the book.

Whatever approach is used, providing information on the sexual content of books must be done with care to avoid offending any readers. Conservative readers are opposed to such material. In contrast, more liberal readers are angered by any appearance of censorship or condescension.

We should note that the opinions of persons with reading limitations reported in the non-user survey are more conservative than those of current NLS readers. Approximately two-thirds of non-users feel that books containing strong language and explicit descriptions of sex should not be available in public libraries. Older people, persons from low-income households, and less educated people are more likely than others to object to such material. Efforts to increase readership among these groups must consider these attitudes.

o Encourage the development of subregional libraries

More users of subregional libraries than users of regional libraries rate the service they receive as excellent. Subregional libraries are able to fill orders more quickly. Users of subregionals are more likely to receive a newsletter and to visit their library in person than are users of regionals. While most users of regional libraries are satisfied, establishment of additional subregional libraries can be expected to produce small improvements in the services mentioned.

o Encourage network libraries to develop innovative ways to serve patrons

Among our recommendations for network libraries are the development and testing of programs which might allow the network libraries to serve patrons even more effectively than at present. While network libraries are responsible for direct services to patrons, support from NLS is probably needed for the network libraries to develop new programs. We would encourage NLS to consider establishment of a program to provide funds for service improvement at the regional/subregional level.

Recommendations for Network Libraries

- Provide a formal method for obtaining input from readers on a regular basis

To provide the variety of materials desired by such a large and diverse group as NLS readers is a difficult task. Librarians and users differ in their opinions of topics needed. Librarians see a great need for books on religion, westerns, humor, light fiction, and classics. Except for humor, these are not the topics desired by most users. Respondents in the user survey rate bestsellers, humor, biography and historical fiction as most important.

A regular, formal method of allowing readers to inform the library/NLS of their interests is needed. One solution would be to modify the forms currently used by readers to order available materials from their network libraries. Space should be provided for readers to list desired books which are currently not available in talking book (or braille) format. After network libraries compile these data, they could forward the information to the NLS production division.

- Select books only for readers who request this service

While 23 percent of respondents appreciate having books selected for them by their network library, more than one-third of respondents never want this to be done. In their responses to the Network Library Survey, librarians overestimate the extent to which patrons desire their library to make book selections. Apparently, some regional and subregional libraries need to review the system by which they decide to select books for certain patrons. All readers should know that their library is willing to select books for them, but only readers who request this service should receive it.

- Develop and evaluate a pilot program to contact infrequent users of talking books

While most current readers express a high level of satisfaction with their network library, respondents who give their library a fair or poor rating also experience more problems with the equipment and voice more complaints about the availability of materials and the speed with which orders are filled. Compared with respondents who give their library a good or excellent rating, these less satisfied readers also report less frequent use of talking books.

Perhaps certain readers who, for whatever reasons, are frustrated by negative experience with NLS, gradually decrease the frequency with which they use talking books until, finally, they cease using NLS materials completely. This hypothesis is consistent with the high proportion of good and excellent ratings given by current readers; frustrated patrons, of course, seek alternate ways to read. We recommend that one or several network libraries conduct a study to test:

- Whether less frequent readers have more complaints than do more frequent readers and
- Whether intervention on the part of the library could resolve the problems before the frustrated reader goes elsewhere.

Specifically, the pilot study would have the following framework:

- Keep records on the frequency with which library patrons use talking books
- Identify those readers who use talking books less often than a set criterion (low-use readers)
- Contact half of the low-use readers to assess the reasons for low-use and to solve any problems experienced

- Continue to monitor the use of talking books by those identified as low-use readers
- Determine whether the low-use readers who were contacted show an increase in their use of books as compared to the low-use readers who were not contacted; also assess the extent to which each group of low-use readers has ceased using the program.

If intervention is effective, similar programs could be initiated in other network libraries where funds and staff were available. To aid in the decision whether to implement the program on a wide scale, costs involved in the pilot program should be carefully monitored.

- Evaluate the use of different methods of introducing new patrons to NLS

Most librarians report that they introduce new patrons to NLS by sending information, sometimes with a welcoming letter, through the mail. Welcoming phone calls are also used, but to a lesser degree. Personal instruction is least frequent: 28 percent of librarians sometimes or always make a personal visit and 50 percent sometimes or always provide instructions on machine use in person.

Network libraries should evaluate the benefits of providing personal instructions to patrons. There is evidence that new users experience more problems than do seasoned users in using equipment. There are also some communication problems: new users often are unaware of the music service and sometimes indicate that they do not know how to obtain or replace equipment.

We cannot determine from the user survey the extent to which such frustrations have led new readers to discontinue using NLS. A controlled study in several libraries of the extent to which different methods of instructing new patrons result in decreasing problems for new users and, thus, in

their continued use of NLS would be useful. Such a study might compare the following methods of introducing new patrons to NLS:

- Only mail instructions
- Mail instructions followed by a telephone call in several weeks to question patrons about problems they have experienced and to provide solutions to these problems
- Instructions in person
- Instructions in person followed by a telephone call in several weeks to question patrons about problems and to provide solutions.

- Improve inspection procedures

The new ALA standards state that libraries shall inspect all materials received and make them available for recirculation within one work day. Twenty-four percent of responding libraries report that they do not usually inspect reading materials for defects. These libraries should institute regular inspection procedures.

METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) is designed to meet the reading needs of persons with reading limitations. Public Law 89-522 authorized the establishment of this decentralized library system which consists of a federal unit in Washington, D.C. and a network of regional and subregional libraries. The federal unit sets policy, arranges for preparation of materials and equipment, and provides administrative and coordination services. The 159 regional and subregional libraries distribute materials to readers and operate the program within their geographic areas. These libraries are funded by a combination of federal, state, and local monies and by private contributions. With a few exceptions, there is one regional library in each state. Any local public library which serves more than 200 blind and handicapped readers may apply to its state regional library to become a subregional library.

The Library of Congress, which administers the program, contracted with Market Facts, Inc., to conduct the survey of NLS users described in this report. Two primary sources of names of NLS users exist. Network libraries maintain lists of their patrons. Also available are the lists of subscribers to the bimonthly publications, Talking Book Topics (TBT) and the Braille Book Review (BBR), which describe the reading materials available for distribution by the NLS.

Users of NLS differ with regard to type of handicap, age, age at which the handicap first appeared, reading interests, and the like. A systematic planning approach is necessary to ensure that the needs of all users are met. The value of surveying a sample of the total population of users lies in being able to describe the size of each subgroup within the population and its needs, preferences, and characteristics. With this information, current user needs for equipment and reading materials can be assessed, and recommendations for improvements to meet these needs can be made.

In this chapter the developmental research, sampling methods, and interviewing procedures of the study are presented. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how the results should be interpreted in light of methodological considerations.

DEVELOPMENTAL RESEARCH

Qualitative Research

Developmental research was conducted at two regional libraries. This phase of the research was not intended as a formal data collection effort from which findings would be reported. Rather, this phase consisted of qualitative research, conducted by the project director, to provide input into the final study design, particularly the design of the questionnaire.

The developmental research consisted of interviews with library staff and patrons. Lengthy discussions were held with the head librarians and other staff members. These discussions served to identify issues to be covered in the users' and network library surveys. Areas discussed included library structure and operation, record keeping, collection development, and patron characteristics, needs, and interests. In addition, library materials, publications, and newsletters were reviewed to learn about libraries' communication with patrons.

Following the staff interviews, a focus group discussion was conducted in each of the two libraries. This qualitative technique, widely used by researchers, involves bringing together a group of persons from the subject population for a discussion of about 90 minutes in length. A skilled discussion leader uses a topic outline to provide guidance but encourages informal interaction among the participants. The purpose of the focus group discussion is to identify all of the relevant issues and the language used to discuss these issues. A consensus on any issue is <u>not</u> sought at this point. In other words, a single mention of what appears to be a relevant issue is noteworthy.

The fact that an idea emerges from a focus group means that it exists in the subject population. Determining the extent to which it exists is the purpose of the quantitative phase.

The two focus groups consisted of eight and ten participants, respectively. Each was led by the project director and was arranged by the regional librarian. Since participants were not selected using random methods, the focus group participants should not be viewed as representative of the user population. In fact, participants in these two groups were of a somewhat higher educational level, slightly younger, and more likely to be employed than the user population as a whole.

Interaction among focus group participants provided extremely useful input for the design of the survey instrument. Comments about the various types of equipment and reading materials, subject matter, narration, annotations, and service received from the regional library were incorporated in the questionnaire.

To complete the developmental research, four institutionalized or bedridden patrons were interviewed. These interviews were semi-structured, relatively informal discussions, during which notes were taken. While no generalizations to the user population can be made, the opinions of these patrons appeared to reflect some particular concerns of institutionalized or severely disabled individuals. Comments about the physical and mechanical aspects of the equipment, the range of topics needed, and the problems associated with having multiple or severe disabilities were especially informative.

Questionnaire Development and Pretesting

When the interviews and focus groups were completed, a draft questionnaire was developed. Representatives of virtually all sections of NLS provided input into the design of the instrument. The instrument was designed to develop a comprehensive profile of NLS users, their characteristics, their reading needs and interests, and their experiences with books and equipment provided by regional and subregional libraries.

The draft questionnaire was pretested to obtain information on both the survey methodology and the questionnaire content. The pretest sample was drawn from patron lists of four regional libraries. Questionnaires were mailed to a sample of 100 patrons. To test the feasibility of doing so in the full survey, half of these patrons received a postcard along with the questionnaire. The postcard offered the option of being interviewed by telephone. To test adequately the telephone version of the questionnaire, a list of an additional forty names and phone numbers was compiled for telephone interviewing.

Table I presents the pretest response breakdown. Of the 140 names, at least 24 were not usable because the information was inaccurate or the person was deceased or too ill to participate. Fifty-seven interviews were completed. Two methodological considerations emerged from the pretest:

- At least 17 percent of names on the regional library lists were not usable.
- Of the 57 persons who completed questionnaires, 53 had used the library in the past year. Fifty- two of these reported that they had received TBT and/or BBR during the past four months.

TABLE 1

PRETEST RESPONSES

	Mail	Telephone
Initial sample size	100	40
Respondents unavailable:		
Deceased; too ill	-	5
Questionnaire undeliverable by post office	10	-
Wrong phone number; correct phone number unavailable	-	9
No answer (after 5 attempts)	1*	6
Refusals	1	2
Postcards returned too late	2*	-
Completed questionnaires	39	18

*Four persons returned the postcard requesting a telephone interview: two postcards were received too late, one person could not be contacted, and one completed interview resulted.

Regarding the content of the questionnaire, the pretest indicated the instrument was basically sound. Analysis of the pretest questionnaires resulted in several minor modifications and changes in wording. In addition, the pretest revealed that the list of book topics was too lengthy. Consequently, the standard research procedure of producing two separate versions of the question (each of which includes half the responses, randomly assigned) was used in the final questionnaire.

SAMPLE DESIGN

The objective in designing the survey sample was to obtain a representative sample of the NLS readership, and, at the same time, to allow detailed examination of important reader subgroups. In particular, it was felt that special procedures should be developed for analysis of braille readers, given that they comprise a small but important proportion of the NLS readership. The process by which the final sample design was determined is explained in the following paragraphs.

As mentioned, two primary sources of listings of NLS users are (1) lists of subscribers to BBR and TBT and (2) lists maintained by the regional libraries. Precise information regarding the accuracy of the various lists and the degree of overlap among them was unavailable; assessing these factors became the first task in designing the survey sample.

To assess the degree of consistency among regional library user lists, all regional librarians were contacted by telephone. They were asked what methods were used in the initial compilation of the lists and how the user lists are maintained and updated. Copies of user lists for many libraries were obtained and examined. It became clear that methods of compiling, maintaining, and updating user lists vary widely. There are, of course, major differences between automated and non-automated systems. Libraries also vary in type of filing system and amount of staff time and resources available. These factors particularly affect the degree to which libraries are able to keep users' names, addresses, and other data current.

It appeared, then, that centralized subscription lists for TBT and BBR would provide the most comprehensive -- and, consequently, the most representative -- sample of NLS users. This hypothesis was tested in the pretest. The regional library lists used in the pretest were found to contain a number of inaccurate addresses and phone numbers. Moreover, nearly all current users who completed the pretest reported receiving TBT. Considered together, the pretest results and knowledge of regional library lists confirmed the hypothesis that the TBT subscription list would provide the best representation of the NLS general readership. Thus, a random sample of 8,286 names was drawn from the 251,629 names on the current TBT subscription list. Only users themselves were eligible for the survey. The codes which NLS includes on the list to indicate institutions, schools, or other interested persons were used to identify and eliminate ineligible names from the sample draw.

Given that the braille readership comprises a small proportion (approximately five percent) of the total NLS readership, it was determined that supplementary sampling was needed to provide a large enough number of braille readers for detailed examination. Five-hundred eleven names were drawn from the 8,063 names on the BBR large print edition list and 1,509 names from the 11,380 names on the BBR braille edition list. These two braille reader samples were combined for analysis. Because disproportionate samples were drawn from the two listings, it was necessary to employ weighting procedures in combining these two braille samples. The heading "BBR sample" in tables throughout this report refers to this weighted sample of braille readers. (The data weighting procedure is described in detail in Appendix C.) In no cases have the TBT and BBR samples been combined with one another.

SURVEY METHODS

Interviewing Procedures for User Survey

Questionnaires were mailed out in September, 1979. The mailing consisted of a 16 page legal sized booklet printed in large upper case print and a postage paid return envelope addressed to Market Facts. The white outgoing envelope contained the NLS return address and a computer-printed mailing label. The first page of the questionnaire served as a cover letter which explained the purpose of the study, stressed the importance of completing and returning the questionnaire, and encouraged respondents to make negative as well as positive comments to provide information which could help improve services. The Library of Congress seal, NLS return address, and the NLS Director's name appeared. The second page of the questionnaire provided instructions for completing the questionnaire. Pages 3-15 contained 41 questions, and the back page was blank.

Three weeks after the initial mailing, reminder postcards were mailed to sample members from whom completed questionnaires had not been received. The cards were printed in two sections to allow respondents to detach and return a card requesting either a telephone interview or a replacement questionnaire. Respondents who wished to be interviewed by telephone were asked to specify a day and time to be called for the interview.

Replacement questionnaires were requested by 300 respondents, and 427 readers returned postcards requesting a telephone interview. Telephone interviewers at Market Facts' central WATS facility in Chicago made up to five attempts, at various times throughout the day and evening, to reach each respondent who requested a telephone interview. Telephone

interviews were completed with 299 respondents. As indicated in Table 2, it was not possible to complete interviews with 128 readers who requested telephone interviews. Of the completed interviews, 264 respondents reported that they had received library materials during the past year.

The characteristics of the telephone interviewees are compared with those of respondents who completed the mail questionnaire in Table 3. While females and whites comprised the majority in both groups, the percentage of non-whites and females was higher among telephone respondents than among mail respondents. More telephone respondents than mail respondents lived alone and fewer were in institutions.

Respondents were asked how often they had someone available to help them read personal mail, newspapers and magazines, and books. As Table 4 indicates, telephone interviewees differed from those returning the mail questionnaire in their responses to this question. Fewer reported that they had help very often, and more telephone interviewees indicated they seldom or never had such help available.

Response Rates for User Survey

The disposition of all questionnaires mailed out is shown in Table 5. Several considerations affect the specification of the response rate in the present study. The samples were drawn from subscription lists of persons who, presumably, could be contacted at the listed address. Not every individual whose name appeared on the list was qualified to respond to the survey. In some cases, the code appearing on the subscriber list did not correctly distinguish librarians or other interested parties from users. Other names referred to deceased subscribers.

TABLE 2

DISPOSITION OF REQUESTS FOR
TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS

Interviews completed	299
Unable to contact respondent after 5 attempts	65
Telephone disconnected/wrong number provided	21
Respondent not qualified*	15
Language barrier	14
Respondent incapable of being interviewed	8
Respondent declined to be interviewed	4
Respondent deceased	1
Total number of requests for telephone interviews	427

*Included in this group were teachers and other interested persons whose status was not indicated on the subscription lists and who were incorrectly selected for the sample.

TABLE 3

SEX, RACE, AGE, AND LIVING ARRANGEMENTS
OF MAIL AND TELEPHONE RESPONDENTS

	Percent of Respondents	
	Mail Respondents	Telephone Respondents
Sex	%	%
Male	43	37
Female	57	63
Race		
Non-white	6	13
White	94	87
Hispanic and other		
Age		
Under 24	11	9
25 - 44	18	21
45 - 64	25	30
65 or older	45	40
Living arrangements		
Alone	22	27
With Family or Friends	70	69
Institution	8	4

TABLE 4

AVAILABILITY OF READING ASSISTANCE AMONG
TELEPHONE AND MAIL RESPONDENTS

	Percentage of Respondents Who Have Someone to Help Them Read:					
	Personal mail		Newspapers		Books	
	Mail	Telephone	Mail	Telephone	Mail	Telephone
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very often	74	63	43	29	33	24
Sometimes	13	21	21	14	14	13
Seldom or never	13	16	36	57	53	62

Source: Questionnaire Item 38.

TABLE 5

DISPOSITION OF SAMPLE (BY SOURCE)

Addressees not able to be located/interviewed:	Total	Sample source: TBT	BBR (Large-print)	BBR (Braille)
Returned by post office:				
Undeliverable	106	90	3	13
Moved, no forwarding address	61	51	3	7
Deceased:				
Questionnaire returned unopened	69	62	5	2
Questionnaire returned by family member	26	24	2	-
Addressee not a user (teachers, librarians, interested persons, etc.)	37	21	13	3
	299	248	26	25
Non-response (contact made)				
Blank questionnaire returned	111	97	6	8
Respondent unavailable	11	11	-	-
Respondent too ill to complete questionnaire	10	10	-	-
Respondent requested braille questionnaire	2	-	1	1
Addressee refused acceptance of mail questionnaire	18	18	-	-
Respondent refused	9	6	1	2
	161	142	8	11
Total number initially mailed out	10,306	8,286	511	1,509
	-299	-248	-26	-25
Total base for calculation of response rate	10,007	8,038	485	1,484
Total completed interviews	4,415	3,594	189	632
Response rate	44%	45%	39%	43%

Those addressees who were clearly identified as not qualified were deducted from the total number mailed out in calculating the response rate. It is likely that the category of non-respondents includes other individuals who fall into the "not qualified respondent" category (e.g., deceased persons whose relatives discarded the questionnaire), but there is no way to verify the number of such cases. The effect of this is a conservative estimate of the true response rate.

As the figures on the bottom half of Table 5 indicate, a total of 4,415 questionnaires out of a potential 10,007 were returned for a response rate of 44 percent. Completion rates across the three samples were fairly consistent. The slight variations noted do not have implications for the interpretation of the findings reported, as the samples from the three sources were not combined.

Procedures for Network Library Survey

In conjunction with NLS staff, a questionnaire was designed for completion by regional and subregional librarians. The objective in designing this questionnaire was to avoid overlap with internal surveys which are regularly conducted by the NLS reference section. Rather than examining the same issues as are covered in those surveys, the present survey focused primarily on aspects of the network's operation which are directly related to users' needs and interests.

The questionnaire was mailed in December, 1979, to 150 regional and subregional libraries in the NLS network. The instructions specified that the head librarian should complete the questionnaire. (A copy of the questionnaire appears in Appendix B.) In early January, telephone calls were made to librarians who had not yet returned the questionnaire. The findings in this report are based upon a total sample of 141 of the 150 network libraries contacted.

INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

In interpreting the results of any survey, the reader should keep in mind limitations concerning (1) the accuracy of the answers given by respondents, and (2) generalizing from sample estimates to population values.

The results of this survey are based on self-report. The validity of the results depends on the accuracy of individual responses. Careful attention to wording and specification of clear and unambiguous response categories increase response accuracy. In executing this survey, every effort was made to encourage respondents to make negative as well as positive comments. However, responses are still subject to distortion due to such causes as faulty memory.

Secondly, the findings presented in this report are estimates of the values which would be found if all members of the population were questioned. Estimates based on samples drawn using random procedures are the best estimates of actual population values. The larger the sample, the more likely it is that a sample estimate is close to the actual value; however, all estimates are subject to sampling error.

In addition to possible sampling error, non-response serves as a source of bias which is difficult to assess. If, for example, as some survey research indicates, older people are less likely than younger ones to respond to a survey, the average age of respondents would be younger than the average age of the actual population. To estimate the effects of non-response, the findings from this survey were compared to findings reported in Reading with Print Limitations, Executive Summary, the summary report of another NLS-sponsored study. The comparisons are included in Chapter 3 of this report. No substantial distortions in the user profile were noted.

The fact that the obtained sample size is large tends to mitigate problems of non-response in analyzing subgroups of NLS users. Policy questions about the needs of middle-aged respondents, young braille readers, low-income readers, or any other group can be examined within the present data. Any special needs, interests, or experiences of such subgroups should be apparent. Non-response, while potentially affecting population parameters, should not eliminate or obscure findings about the distinctive features of subgroups when large numbers of each subgroup have responded.

A final word of caution is needed regarding the dangers of focusing on the relationship between any two variables without considering relationships which exist between these and other variables. In any population, there are inter-relationships among many variables and a statement about any two of them may be misleading. For example, in the present study, members of the BBR sample differed from members of the TBT sample in a number of ways (e.g., age, age when the ability to read conventional printed material was lost, length of use of the library). All the interrelationships should be considered in interpreting patterns. The findings must be interpreted in the context of other available information about library users and policy making needs.

DETAILED FINDINGS: USER SURVEY

In the following analysis, the terms "respondents," "subscribers," "readers," and "users" are used interchangeably to refer to individuals who completed interviews in the survey. Unless otherwise noted, the results refer to the sample of subscribers to Talking Book Topics (TBT).

USER CHARACTERISTICS

Selected user characteristics are presented in Tables 6-9. Where available, comparable figures for the U.S. population as a whole and for the population of persons with reading limitations are included. U.S. population figures are taken from the Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1979 edition. Figures for persons with reading limitations are taken from Reading with Print Limitations Executive Summary (1979), the summary report of another survey sponsored by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS). While the findings presented in this report (referred to as the user survey) are based on respondents who were known to be users of the NLS, in the comparison survey (referred to in this report as the non-user survey) a randomly selected sample of U.S. households was contacted and persons with reading limitations were identified. Twelve percent of those identified in the non-user survey as having reading limitations indicated they are currently using the NLS.

The users of NLS are unable to read conventional printed material because of a visual or physical disability. As Table 6 indicates, most respondents to the user survey (64%) have a visual handicap only. Another 7 percent have only a physical handicap, while 15 percent have both a physical and visual handicap. Twelve percent of respondents have a

TABLE 6

HANDICAPS REPORTED BY RESPONDENTS

	User Survey	Non-User Survey	
	TBT Sample	NLS Users	Non-Users
	%	%	%
Type of handicap			
Visual only	64	52	31
Physical only	7	1	5
Learning only	1	1	7
Visual & physical	15	31	26
Visual & hearing	12	*	*
Other multiple	1	15	30

User Survey Source: Questionnaire Item 33.

Non-User Survey Source: Reading with Print Limitations Executive Summary, page 57.

*Not reported separately.

hearing impairment in addition to a visual handicap. Respondents in the user survey are more likely than those in the non-user survey to have a visual handicap only and less likely to report having multiple handicaps. Different phrasing of questions in the two surveys may account for these differences.

Table 7 summarizes selected demographic characteristics of survey respondents. In general, NLS users are:

- o Older than the U.S. population
- o More likely to be women
- o More likely to be white
- o Have a higher level of education
- o Have a lower income
- o Are more likely to be living alone.

With regard to age, sex, employment status, and living arrangements, users of the NLS do not differ from persons with reading limitations who do not use the library. There are differences, however, between users and non-users with regard to race, education, and income. While 7 percent of respondents to the user survey are non-white, 21 percent of non-users are non-white. Similarly, 37 percent of NLS users have some college education, while just 18 percent of non-users have attended college. Moreover, nearly one of every two non-users has no more than a grade school education, while only one NLS user in five has completed eight years or less of education.

Finally, despite more education, NLS users report annual incomes lower than those of the general population. Although $15,000 is below the median annual income for the U.S. population, only 20 percent of NLS users and 6 percent of

TABLE 7

SELECTED SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF NLS USERS, NON-USERS, AND COMPARABLE FIGURES FOR U.S. POPULATION

	User Survey	Non-User Survey		
	TBT Sample	NLS Users	Non-Users	U.S. Population
	%	%	%	%
Age				
Under 14	5	8*	12*	22
15-44	21	23*	15*	48
45-64	24	26	26	20
65 and over	50	44	48	11
User Survey Source: Questionnaire Item 31.				
Sex				
Male	43	45	40	49
Female	57	55	60	51
User Survey Source: Questionnaire Item 41.				
Race				
White	93	91	79	86
Non-white	7	9	21	14
User Survey Source: Questionnaire Item 40.				
Employment Status				
Employed	10	7	9	59
Student	9	18	14	5
Homemaker	15	10	13	19
Retired	49	36	41	6
Not working, other reason	17	28	23	11
User Survey Source: Questionnaire Item 35.				

TABLE 7 (cont.)

	User Survey	Non-User Survey		U.S.
	TBT Sample	NLS Users	Non-Users	Population
	%	%	%	%
Education				
Grade School or less	21	23	47	19
High School	35	40	36	51
College	37	37	18	30
Trade/Technical School	7	**	**	**

User Survey Source: Questionnaire Item 34.

Income				
Less than $5,000	37	39	50	9
$5,000-9,999	28	29	23	18
$10,000-14,999	15	14	12	18
$15,000 or more	20	18	6	55

User Survey Source: Questionnaire Item 36.

Living Arrangement				
Live alone	22	21	23	8
Live with others	78	79	77	92

User Survey Source: Questionnaire Item 37.

Non-User Survey Source: Reading with Print Limitations Executive Summary, page 49.

U.S. Population figures from the Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1979 edition, 1978 figures.

*Non-User Survey most comparable age categories are under 16 and 17-44.

**Not reported separately.

non-users report incomes of $15,000 or more. Among persons with reading limitations, however, NLS users have higher incomes than do non-users. The data suggest that the library has been less effective in reaching potential users who are non-white, have lower incomes, or are less educated than the current user population.

Table 8 presents respondents' living arrangements by age. More than two-thirds of all respondents live with family or friends. Nevertheless, the proportion who live alone is greater among NLS users than it is among the U.S. population as a whole. Among users age 80 and older, less than half live with family or friends.

Data on the age at which users became unable to read conventional printed material are presented in Table 9. Nearly two of every three TBT respondents lost the ability to read conventional printed material sometime after reaching age 45.

READERS' USE OF LIBRARY SERVICES

To help NLS plan programs which will best serve users' needs and interests during the coming years, the survey instrument included numerous items which allowed respondents to identify problems, report specific equipment needs, and indicate their desire for reading materials in particular subject areas. In addition, certain information was gathered on readers' history of and experiences with using NLS. Taken together, these attitudinal and behavioral data provide useful insights for future policy planning.

TABLE 8

RESPONDENTS' LIVING ARRANGEMENTS, BY AGE

	Age						
	Under 14	15 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 to 79	80 and over	Total TBT sample
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Percent of TBT Respondents living:							
Alone	2	7	12	17	32	31	23
With family or friends	94	84	84	79	62	48	69
At school/institution/ hospital/nursing home	4	9	4	4	6	21	9

Source: Questionnaire Item 37.

TABLE 9

AGE AT WHICH RESPONDENTS BECAME UNABLE TO READ CONVENTIONAL PRINTED MATERIAL

	Percent of TBT sample
	%
Age at which disability began	
Under 10	9
10 to 14	4
15 to 24	7
25 to 44	16
45 to 64	26
65 to 79	26
80 and over	12

Source: Questionnaire Item 32.

Respondents Not Using NLS During the Past Year

As was pointed out in the description of the survey methodology, the original intent was to study only those persons who had actually used NLS reading materials during the twelve months preceding the survey. Consequently, the questionnaire began with a screening item. The 498 respondents who said they had not used the service during that period were asked why they had not done so.

The responses of the 384 readers who answered this open-ended question are shown in Table 10. As the size of the sample base reflects, a number of readers did not respond to this item, a fact which reduces the already small number of "non-users."

As the figures in Table 10 indicate, 20 percent of non-users in the TBT sample say they have not had time to use the service. For another sizeable group of respondents, physical (13%) and/or visual (11%) disabilities prevent use of the service. Others report that they no longer need NLS materials (4%) or that they rely upon other sources for reading materials (11%).

It should be noted that there were a small number of meaningless or inappropriate responses. For example, it is not clear why visual difficulties or illiteracy would prevent use of recorded materials. Such responses most likely reflect respondents' misinterpretations of the question or an inability to express precisely what they mean (especially true in open-ended questions). A few such cases are inevitable in any large-scale survey.

TABLE 10

REASONS REPORTED BY NON-USERS FOR NOT USING NLS MATERIALS DURING PAST 12 MONTHS

Reason	Percent of TBT sample %
Have not had time	20
Physical condition prevents use	13
Visual disability prevents use	11
Rely upon other sources	11
Have not received requested materials	11
Not interested in available topics	10
Not satisfied with the service	5
Able to read printed material	5
No longer need the service	4
Unable to read braille	4
Machine broken	4
Do not have proper equipment	3
Unable to read	2
All other reasons	17

*Multiple responses were accepted for this unaided item. Thus, column total is greater than 100 percent.

Source: Questionnaire Item 2.

Another look at the data reveals that there are several aspects of the service itself which have led to non-use among some respondents. A number of readers report they have not received requested materials (11%), while 10 percent express lack of interest in available topics. A total of 7 percent say they have not taken advantage of NLS materials during the past year because their machines are broken or they do not have the proper equipment. Finally, 5 percent of the TBT sample simply say they are dissatisfied with the service.

History of Use of NLS

As Table 11 indicates, about one-third of TBT subscribers have used the service for at least seven years. Another one-third have used it for between one and three years, and 12 percent have been subscribers for less than one year. This sample of TBT subscribers, then, includes a fairly even mix of long and short-time users.

Respondents were asked how they first heard about the free library service for the blind and physically handicapped. Their responses are shown in Table 12. More than seven out of ten users first learned of NLS from friends, relatives, or an organization serving the blind and/or handicapped. Fourteen percent of the TBT sample learned of NLS through a hospital, nursing home, doctor or nurse, while 7 percent learned of the program from a public library or a social service organization serving the general public. The least likely sources of initial information about NLS were mass media; just 4 percent of the sample named either printed media or radio/TV as their source.

Younger respondents were much more likely to have learned of NLS through a school or library for the blind or handicapped. Older users, on the other hand, tended to hear about the program from friends or relatives; about half of

TABLE 11

LENGTH OF TIME RESPONDENTS HAVE USED NLS

Number of years	Percent of TBT sample %
Less than one year	12
1 to 3 years	33
4 to 6 years	23
7 to 9 years	11
10 years or more	21

Source: Questionnaire Item 3.

TABLE 12

HOW USERS FIRST HEARD OF NLS BY AGE

	Age							
	Total	Under 10	10 to 14	15 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 to 79	80 and over
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Source								
Friend or relative	37	15	11	16	27	28	44	55
School or library/ organization serving the blind/handicapped	35	77	70	65	50	42	26	14
Hospital, nursing home, doctor, nurse	14	2	8	7	9	16	16	18
Public library or social service organization serving general public	7	-	6	6	8	8	7	7
Media	4	4	5	2	2	4	4	3
Other sources	3	2	1	3	3	2	3	2

Source: Questionnaire Item 5.

those aged 65 and over learned of NLS in this manner. Eighteen percent of those 80 years and older first learned of NLS from a hospital, nursing home, doctor or nurse.

Users' Communication With Their Libraries

Most NLS users communicate with the library simply to order reading materials. Besides this type of communication, users may be in contact with their regional and subregional libraries through library newsletters and personal visits to the library.

About six out of ten respondents (62%) report that they receive a newsletter from their libraries. When asked to assess the newsletter's usefulness (Table 13), more than 90 percent of these respondents rate the newsletter either "somewhat" or "very" useful. Only 7 percent believe the newsletter is "not at all" useful.

Most contact with the regional and subregional libraries is limited to telephone and written communication. Only 14 percent of those surveyed say they have visited their library in person (see Table 14). The likelihood of visiting the library is greater among young readers and males, and more subregional library users (20%) than regional library users (12%) have visited their libraries in person.

The tendency to visit the library in person also increases with respondents' income. Those reporting an income of $20,000 or more are twice as likely to have made a personal visit to the library than are those with incomes

TABLE 13

RATINGS OF USEFULNESS OF LIBRARY NEWSLETTER
BY RESPONDENTS WHO RECEIVE NEWSLETTER

Rating of Newsletter	Percent of respondents %
Very useful	40
Somewhat useful	53
Not at all useful	7

Source: Questionnaire Item 28.

TABLE 14

PERSONAL VISITS TO LIBRARY

	Percent of respondents ever visiting library in person
	%
Total Sample	14
Age	
Under 10	15
10 to 14	24
15 to 24	17
25 to 44	18
45 to 64	16
65 to 79	12
80 and over	7
Sex	
Male	17
Female	12
Income	
Under $10,000	11
$10,000 - 19,999	16
$20,000 or more	23
Residential Status	
Institutionalized	11
Live alone	12
Live with family/friends	15

Source: Questionnaire Item 29a.

under $10,000. Finally, those who live with family or friends are slightly more likely to have visited the library than are those who live alone or in institutions.

All respondents were asked why they do not visit the library more often; these responses are shown in Table 15. The most frequent reason-- given by two-thirds of the sample--is that "the library is too far away from where I live." Another 10 percent volunteer that they lack transportation to the library.

The other major reason for not visiting the library is that physical problems prevent respondents from doing so (16%). Reasons written in by respondents include general statements about physical disability and age, as well as more specific responses (e.g., "I have heart problems," "I have to stay in bed," and the like). This is clearly related to respondents' age: while only 5 percent of respondents under the age of 15 provide such reasons for not visiting the library, nearly one-third of those aged 80 and older mention physical problems.

Eight percent of respondents report no special problems in visiting the library, while another 3 percent say they have no need to visit the library in person.

EQUIPMENT USE AND PROBLEMS

Users' problems with equipment were assessed by first asking if a respondent has access to a given piece of equipment and then determining the degree to which he or she has encountered various problems. Nearly all respondents indicate access to reading equipment from a regional or

TABLE 15

REASONS USERS DO NOT VISIT LIBRARY IN PERSON

Reason	Percent of respondents who give this reason %
Library is too far away	67
Physical condition prevents visiting library	16
Transportation problems	10
Have no particular problem	8
Library hours not convenient	4
Have no need to visit library	3
Library is not barrier free	2
All other reasons	4

Multiple responses were accepted for this item. Thus, column total is greater than 100 percent.

Source: Questionnaire Item 29b.

subregional library. There are no differences here by subgroups; evidently the library is serving the equipment needs of all groups of users equally well. Across all groups, users are more likely to have a talking-book record player than a cassette player. Nine respondents out of every ten have a talking-book record player, while two of every three have a cassette player. More than half of the respondents use both records and cassettes, approximately one-third have only a record player, and fewer than one in ten respondents appear to use only cassette players.

In general, it appears that persons who have used the library for many years are more likely to have talking-book record players. While four out of five persons who have used the library for less than one year report having access to talking-book record players, this figure increases to nineteen out of twenty long-term (more than seven years) users.

Talking-Book Record Players

Problems with the talking-book record players include problems with service--e.g., receiving books with missing or damaged records--or problems in operating the equipment--e.g., difficulties in finding the beginning of a record, in reading the labels, or in placing the discs on the record player. The percentages of users who report each problem are displayed in Table 16. Reading record labels appears to present the greatest problem for respondents; still, just 21% report that this problem occurs very often, while a majority (53%) say it never occurs. The other problems tested rarely occur very often: just 9 percent of readers report that they often have problems finding the beginning of the record; 7 percent often have difficulty placing discs on players, and 5 percent report that they often receive books with damaged or missing records.

TABLE 16

PROBLEMS WITH TALKING BOOK
RECORD PLAYERS REPORTED BY USERS WITH
ACCESS TO THESE MACHINES

Problem	Percent of users who report that problem occurs: Very Often %	Sometimes %	Seldom %	Never %
Reading record labels	21	13	13	53
Finding record beginning	9	20	22	49
Placing discs on player	7	12	14	67
Receiving books with damaged or missing records	5	25	37	33

Source: Questionnaire Item 9.

TABLE 17

PROBLEMS WITH CASSETTE PLAYERS
REPORTED BY USERS WITH ACCESS TO THESE MACHINES

Problem	Percent of users who report that problem occurs: Very Often %	Sometimes %	Seldom %	Never %
Reading cassette label	18	13	12	57
Receiving cassettes that must be rewound	14	29	26	32
Finding correct side of cassette	11	20	17	52
Figuring out which controls to use	7	16	17	60
Receiving cassettes that don't play	6	24	28	43
Hearing other side in background	5	25	25	45
Receiving books with missing cassettes	5	18	27	50
Getting tapes tangled	4	24	30	42
Operating controls is too strenuous	3	4	7	87

Source: Questionnaire Items 9 and 11.

Cassette Players

Cassette users were questioned about a variety of problems associated with cassette players, as shown in Table 17. Again, few problems appear to occur very often. The most frequent problems with cassette players are:

- o reading labels (18 percent report that this is often a problem),
- o receiving tapes which need to be rewound (14 percent say this problem occurs very often), and
- o finding the correct side of the cassette (11 percent report that this is often a problem).

Fewer than 7 percent say that any of the other problems tested occur very often, although certain problems seem to occur with some regularity among subgroups of the population.

Problem Patterns

Several patterns in the reporting of problems are worth discussion. A number of problems occur more frequently among elderly readers (see Table 18), especially among those aged 80 and older. The percentage of readers who often have problems reading record or cassette labels increases from about 6 percent among the very young to about 35 percent among the very old. Similarly, while less than 3 percent of readers under age 45 frequently have problems figuring out the cassette controls, 14 percent of those aged 80 and older do so. The percentage reporting frequent problems with finding the correct side of the cassette also increases with age although less dramatically.

TABLE 18

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE AND CERTAIN PROBLEMS WITH EQUIPMENT

	Percent of users in each age group who report that problem occurs very often					
Problem	Under 15 %	15 to 24 %	25 to 44 %	45 to 64 %	65 to 79 %	80 and over %
Reading record labels	6	5	14	19	24	34
Reading cassette labels	6	6	12	16	22	38
Finding correct side of cassette	10	2	8	10	13	16
Figuring out which controls to use on cassette player	0	1	3	5	10	14

Source: Questionnaire Items 9 and 11.

TABLE 19

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LENGTH OF LIBRARY USE AND CERTAIN PROBLEMS WITH EQUIPMENT

	Percent of users in each usage group who report that problem occurs very often			
	Library Use			
	Less than 1 year %	1-3 years %	4-6 years %	7 or more years %
Problems with decreased reporting over time				
Reading record label	26	23	22	18
Finding record beginning	12	11	8	7
Finding correct side of cassette	15	11	13	9
Problems with increased reporting over time				
Receiving books with damaged or missing records	3	4	4	6
Receiving cassettes that must be rewound	8	12	15	17
Receiving cassettes that don't play	4	5	6	6

Source: Questionnaire Items 9 and 11.

Table 19 presents the relationship between problems and the length of time a person has used the library service. Long-time users are more likely to report receiving books with damaged or missing records, cassettes that must be rewound, or cassettes that don't play. Of more significance are those problems which are reported with decreasing frequency by persons who have been using the library for a longer time. Long-time users are less likely to report problems reading record labels, finding the beginning of a record, and finding the correct side of a cassette. It may be that experience using the equipment helps alleviate these problems among users.

Importance of Equipment Features

Users were questioned about the importance of several features of the reading equipment--having an automatic stop, being easily movable, having variable speeds, and operating on batteries. More than half of the respondents believe that having an automatic stop and being easily movable are very important features (see Table 20). Fewer respondents find the other features to be very important.

Some subgroups of users appear to be more mobile than others -- that is, they are more likely to value equipment that can be easily moved and that runs on batteries. Older users (age 65 and over) and those few users under age 10 rate these features as less important than do users age 10 to 64. Consistent with this is a tendency for fewer retired users or those who live alone or in institutions to rate these features as very important. In addition, fewer very old users (age 80 and older) tend to rate any feature as very important.

TABLE 20

IMPORTANCE OF MACHINE FEATURES

Machine feature	Percent of users who rate each feature as: Very Important %	Somewhat Important %	Not Important at all %
Automatic stop	57	23	20
Easily movable	56	24	20
Variable speeds	45	28	27
Battery operated	37	19	44

Source: Questionnaire Item 12.

READING MATERIALS

Respondents' answers to questions about reading materials are presented below. As in the other parts of the section, data are given for the TBT sample of readers. Fully 81 percent of respondents are unable to use braille (see Table 21). Obviously then, very few readers (4%) report that they often use braille books or magazines. Percentages for the supplemental braille sample are presented in detail in the subsection on braille readers.

Format of Materials

Respondents were questioned about their use of books and magazines on records, cassettes, and in braille (Table 22). More people tend to use books than magazines and, for each, more people use records than cassettes. Two out of every three respondents report that they use talking books on records very often, while only one in nine indicates never using these. Books on cassettes are used less frequently: just half the respondents use them very often and one-quarter never use them. Two out of five respondents (40%) report using magazines on records very often; this decreases to just 11 percent who use magazines on cassettes very often. Of course, more magazines are produced on records than on cassettes. Approximately nine of every ten respondents in the general sample reported never using braille books and braille magazines.

While individual preferences and ability to use braille influence a reader's use of some materials, we may think of a person's use of talking books on records or cassettes as a

TABLE 21

RESPONDENTS' ABILITY TO USE BRAILLE

Ability to use braille	Percent of TBT Sample %
Not able to use braille	81
Able to read some braille	9
Able to read books and magazines in braille	10

Source: Questionnaire Item 16.

TABLE 22

USE OF READING MATERIALS

Materials	Percent of users who report using each of the following reading materials			
	Very Often %	Sometimes %	Seldom %	Never %
Talking books on records	67	16	6	11
Talking books on cassettes	54	14	4	28
Braille books	4	3	4	89
Magazines on records	40	18	8	34
Magazines on cassettes	11	11	8	70
Magazines in braille	4	3	2	92

Source: Questionnaire Item 17.

measure of that person's satisfaction with the NLS and the regional library services. The relationship between problems experienced and frequency of use of talking books on records and cassettes is examined in Table 23. Those who seldom or never use talking books on records are slightly more likely to report that they very often have problems finding the beginning of a record or placing discs on the player than are those who use talking books on records very often. Similarly, those who seldom or never use talking books on cassettes are somewhat more likely than those who often use these items to report each of the following problems:

- Figuring out controls
- Hearing other side of tape
- Receiving cassettes that don't play
- Reading cassette labels
- Finding correct side of cassette.

It may be that frequent experience with these problems causes readers to use talking books less often. It is also possible that these readers experience more problems because they are infrequent and, therefore, inexperienced users, although it is difficult to fathom how experience would relate to two of the cassette problems -- hearing the other side of the tape and receiving cassettes that don't play.

Ordering Materials

Respondents were asked about the methods they use to order reading materials; their answers to these questions are shown in Table 24. As the figures indicate, readers in the

TABLE 23

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FREQUENT EXPERIENCE WITH PROBLEMS AND FREQUENCY OF USE OF TALKING BOOKS ON RECORDS AND CASSETTES

	Percent who report problem very often among those who:		
	Very often use talking books on records	Sometimes use talking books on records	Seldom or never use talking books on records
	%	%	%
Problems with records			
Finding beginning of record	8	10	11
Placing discs on player	6	8	9

	Percent who report problem very often among those who:		
	Very often use talking books on cassettes	Sometimes use talking books on cassettes	Seldom or never use talking books on cassettes
	%	%	%
Problems with cassettes			
Figuring out controls	4	8	24
Hearing other side of tape	5	5	9
Receiving cassettes that don't play	5	6	13
Reading cassette labels	18	18	23
Finding correct side of cassette	8	20	19

Source: Questionnaire Items 9, 11, and 17.

TBT sample are most likely to order materials by reading the one-line description on the print checklist form. Over 40 percent of respondents use this method of ordering very often. About one-fourth of TBT readers report they very often order materials by listening to the recorded version of Talking Book Topics, while the large print edition of that publication is used very often for ordering reading materials by about one-third of the TBT sample.

Another series of questions dealt with readers' attitudes and experiences in ordering materials (Table 25). The readership is divided as to whether they like their libraries to select materials for them: a total of 51% say they like the library to make book selections very often or sometimes, while 14% say they seldom like the library to do this and slightly more than one-third say they never like this to be done. Age is clearly related to attitudes about this matter. The youngest respondents--those under age 10--are most likely to favor their libraries making selections for them. Readers in the middle age groups--from 15 to 44--are least likely to feel this way, with the percentage increasing again somewhat among readers older than 44 years.

As further indicated in Table 25, readers appear to be generally satisfied with the speed with which their orders are filled. Only 14 percent of respondents in the TBT sample indicate that their orders are seldom or never filled quickly.

There is slightly less satisfaction with the availability of materials. About 36 percent of TBT users report that materials which they order are sometimes unavailable, while another 13 percent say this is often the case.

TABLE 24

METHODS USED TO ORDER READING MATERIALS

Method of ordering	Percent of respondents who use method: Very Often %	Sometimes %	Seldom %	Never %
Read the one-line description on print checklist form	43	20	8	29
Listen to most or all of the recorded TBT	25	21	15	40
Use large print edition of TBT	32	16	5	47
Use large print edition of BBR	1	2	2	96
Use braille edition of BBR	3	2	1	94
Use braille checklist order form	2	2	2	94

Source: Questionnaire Item 18b.

TABLE 25

READERS' ATTITUDES ABOUT ORDERING MATERIALS

	Percent of respondents who reported: Very Often %	Sometimes %	Seldom %	Never %
Like library to make book selections	23	28	14	34
Book orders are filled quickly	61	25	10	4
Materials ordered are not available	13	36	28	24

Source: Questionnaire Item 18a.

The relationship between frequency of use of talking books on records and attitudes about ordering materials was examined and the results appear in Table 26. Those who seldom or never use talking books on records are less likely to report that they like the library to select books for them and that their book orders are filled quickly, and they are more likely to report that ordered materials are often not available.

Preferences for Specific Topics

Respondents were asked to indicate whether availability of each of twenty-seven book topics was very important, somewhat important, or not at all important to them. Since all ages, educational levels and occupations are represented among the blind and handicapped, it should come as no surprise that there is a wide diversity of reading interest among users of the library services. Table 27 presents, in order of preference, the ratings of the 27 topics.

Substantial numbers of readers are interested in many topics, but as examination of the percentages displayed in Table 27 indicates, certain topics stand out as being of greater general interest than others. At least two of every five readers consider it very important to have bestsellers, historical fiction, humor, and biography available. Another 35% to 43% of readers consider these topics somewhat important. At least one reader out of three also indicates a high degree of interest in history, detective and mystery stories, literature, religion, travel, and adventure stories.

TABLE 26

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTITUDES
ABOUT ORDERING MATERIALS AND
FREQUENCY OF USE OF TALKING BOOKS
ON RECORDS

Attitude	Percent who report attitude among those who: Very often use talking books on records %	Sometimes use talking books on records %	Seldom or never use talking books on records %
Very often like library to select books	27	20	13
Report book orders are very often filled quickly	63	58	56
Report ordered reading material very often not available	12	10	16

Source: Questionnaire Items 18a and 17.

TABLE 27

READING INTERESTS OF NLS READERSHIP

Topics	Percent rating availability of topic as: Very Important %	Somewhat Important %	Not at all Important %
Bestsellers	47	36	17
Historical fiction	45	35	20
Humor	44	42	14
Biography	41	43	16
History	38	42	20
Detective and mystery	38	31	32
Literature	37	38	25
Religion	35	33	32
Travel	35	38	27
Adventure	35	48	17
Romance	32	40	27
Self-help	31	36	33
Classics	29	40	30
Health	29	38	34
Music	28	31	41
Westerns	27	33	40
Animal and wildlife	26	42	32
Science	26	37	37
Handicapped	24	37	39
Consumer affairs	23	37	40
Politics	20	35	45
Science fiction	18	28	54
Psychology	18	32	50
Hobbies and crafts	17	31	53
Movies and theater	17	35	48
Sports	16	26	58
Painting and sculpture	6	18	77

Source: Questionnaire Item 22.

In general, those topics which receive the greatest number of "very important" ratings also receive the fewest number of "not at all important" ratings. Of the ten most popular topics, only two (religion and detective/mystery) are viewed as not at all important by as many as 30 percent. In addition, movies and theater, politics, music, westerns, and consumer affairs are rated as not at all important by at least four of every ten respondents. Five topics (painting and sculpture, sports, science fiction, hobbies and crafts, and psychology) are rated as not at all important by at least half the respondents.

While there is considerable overlap in reading interests, there are some differences among subgroups of users which should be kept in mind when building a collection for a specific group. Age is important; in general, the younger the respondent, the more topics he or she rates as very important.

Users aged 24 and younger share most of the interests of the general population, particularly humor and adventure. Many younger readers also indicate a desire for books on science, science fiction, music, hobbies, and sports, all topics which are less important among older readers. Children have even wider interests. Books on animals and wildlife are popular with children up to age 14, and material on health and movies and theater is desired by those younger than 10. Tables showing details of the reading interests of subgroups of readers are found in the section of this report which profiles these groups. Institutionalized readers also had some special interests which are discussed in the section of this report which describes these users.

In general, men and women desire the same topics. Some topics, however, are considered important by only one sex. Literature, religion, and travel are less important among men than are adventure, westerns, and science. On the other

hand, adventure is of limited interest to women, while romance is rated as very important by four out of ten female respondents but by few males. Sports and science fiction should also be mentioned because, although not very popular among the total population, these topics are rated as very important by at least one of every four males.

One comment should be made about the relationship between educational level and reading interests. Users with no more than a grade school education tend to feel more topics are very important than do users with higher educational levels. Nine of the ten most popular topics (excluding literature) are rated very important by respondents with only a grade school education. Seven other topics also receive very important ratings from at least three out of ten of these users: romance (33%), self-help (40%), health (34%), music (38%), westerns (38%), animal and wildlife (38%), and handicapped (36%).

While the interests of grade school educated respondents are most divergent from those of the total population, there are minor differences among those with more than a grade school education. Romance appeals to those with a high school education, health to those with a trade or technical school background, and classics to those with at least some college. It should be noted that the high percentage of respondents who rate literature as very important is due to its popularity among users with at least some college education.

Attitudes Toward Narrators

The questionnaire included several items designed to obtain respondents' opinions about the narration of reading materials. Responses to these questions are shown in Table

28. Slightly more than one-fourth of those surveyed prefer male narrators for all materials. By age, older readers are most likely to prefer male narrators. Only among readers under age 10 are female narrators more likely to be preferred than male narrators. However, even among these very young readers, the majority's preference depends upon the subject of the reading material. Fully two-thirds of all readers (67%) report that their attitude toward the sex of the narrator depends on the subject matter.

Respondents were also asked how they felt about narrators' accents and voices. As the figures in Table 28 indicate, 61 percent of readers like narrators to use different voices for different characters. Readers over the age of 80, however, are less likely to feel this way. For about 30 percent of the respondents, it makes no difference whether narrators use different voices or not. Only 9 percent of those surveyed dislike the use of different voices for different characters.

Readers are somewhat less enthusiastic about narrators' use of different accents for different characters. Although 44 percent report that they do like this feature, one-fourth indicate they dislike the use of different accents. Again, age differences are apparent. Readers between the ages of 24 and 44 are most likely to favor the use of different accents: six out of ten express this opinion. Older readers are less likely to feel this way. Among the oldest subgroup (aged 80 and older) about four out of ten respondents say they dislike the use of different accents.

For slightly more than half of the sample, it makes no difference whether narrators themselves have regional accents. About 20 percent of all readers, however, like narrators with regional accents. Again, older respondents

TABLE 28

READERS' OPINIONS ABOUT NARRATORS

	Percent of Respondents
	%
Narrator's Sex	
Always prefer males	27
Always prefer females	2
Preference depends on subject	67
Makes no difference	4
Use of different voices for different characters	
Like the use of different voices	61
Dislike the use of different voices	9
Makes no difference	30
Use of different accents for different characters	
Like the use of different accents	44
Dislike the use of different accents	25
Makes no difference	30
Narrators' accents	
Like narrators with regional accents	20
Dislike narrators with regional accents	26
Makes no difference	55

Source: Questionnaire Items 13, 14, and 15.

(especially those over the age of 80) are less likely to favor narrators with regional accents. This may, of course, be related to the difficulty these respondents may have in understanding recorded materials, particularly if there is a hearing impairment.

In sum, it appears that many readers do not have strong feelings about narrators; many persons indicate they have no preference concerning narrators' accents or the use of different accents for different characters. The only variable which appears to be related to strong preferences here is age. Older readers seem to have more specific likes and dislikes about narrators. More of them favor a straightforward reading--i.e., without accent or characterization.

Attitudes Toward Strong Language and Explicit Descriptions of Sex

Users have mixed attitudes toward strong language and explicit descriptions of sex in fiction. As Table 29 reveals, about three in ten respondents believe such material should never be included. Another four in ten users think it should be included only when important to the story, while 28 percent report that it doesn't matter whether or not descriptions of sex or strong language are included.

Many respondents volunteered opinions about the sexual content of books. The comments indicate that readers are divided between those who feel that too many books with explicit sexual material are available and those who oppose any sort of censorship. Pleasing both groups will be no easy task. Fortunately, 84 percent of respondents would like annotations at the beginning of recorded books. NLS currently records book jacket blurbs at the beginning of recorded books. Expansion of these descriptions to include information about the sexual content of the book should be considered.

TABLE 29

ATTITUDES TOWARD STRONG LANGUAGE AND EXPLICIT SEX IN FICTION

	Percent of Respondents %
Attitudes toward strong language	
Should never be included	29
Should be included only when important to the story	43
Doesn't matter	28
Attitudes toward explicit descriptions of sex	
Should never be included	28
Should be included only when important to the story	44
Doesn't matter	28

Comparison of user attitudes about strong language and descriptions of sex with findings from the non-user survey suggest that non-users are more conservative than are users. Fully two out of every three non-users feel that books containing strong language and explicit descriptions of sex should not be available in libraries. Both the user and non-user surveys indicate that more conservative views on these issues are held by:

- Older readers
- Women
- Readers in lower-income households
- People with relatively less education.

SPECIAL MATERIALS AND SERVICES

There are several specialized areas in which NLS produces materials. Although these may be utilized by only a small proportion of NLS users, they are undoubtedly important to those individuals who have special needs.

One such area is music. The NLS music section produces musical scores and other materials for use by professional musicians, students, and other handicapped persons who have an interest in music. One of the most striking findings in the survey is that few readers are aware that the music service exists. As Table 30 indicates, about one respondent out of four surveyed is aware that music can be ordered through NLS. The very young and the very old are the least likely to have heard of the music service. It appears that awareness of the music service is directly related to length of NLS

TABLE 30

AWARENESS OF NLS MUSIC SERVICE

	Percent of respondents aware of music service
	%
Total sample	24
Age	
Under 15	12
15 to 24	19
25 to 44	30
45 to 64	29
65 to 79	25
80 and over	18
Length of library usage	
3 years	16
4 to 6 years	21
7 to 9 years	28
10 years or more	42

Source: Questionnaire Item 25.

usage. While only 16 percent of relatively new (three years or less) users know of the music service, more than 40 percent of long-time (10 years or more) users are aware of it.

Other special materials are produced in languages other than English. Approximately 10 percent of the sample express an interest in having such materials. Specific languages desired are shown in Table 31. Most of those who desire foreign language materials want materials in Spanish (42%). In addition, about three out of ten of these respondents indicate they would like materials in French or German. With only one exception, these findings are fairly consistent across subgroups of respondents. Hispanic respondents are most likely to be interested in non-English materials: 55 percent would like to have Spanish reading materials. (There were, however, only 36 Hispanic respondents in the sample.)

USERS' ASSESSMENTS OF LIBRARY SERVICE

Throughout this report, readers' assessments of various aspects of NLS have been described. Opinions about the quality and content of reading materials, and about the operation of machines were discussed in sections dealing with those topics. In this section, readers' overall assessments of NLS are examined. Respondents were first asked to rate the service provided by their regional or subregional library and then to volunteer comments and suggestions on any aspect of the library service.

In response to the first question, 58 percent of respondents rate their library service as excellent; 32 percent say it is good, and 9 percent give a rating of fair or poor.

TABLE 31

RESPONDENTS' INTEREST IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE READING MATERIAL

Language	Percent of respondents wanting reading material* %
Spanish	42
French	31
German	31
Italian	12
Polish	9
Other	25

* Percentages are based only upon 316 respondents who expressed an interest in foreign language materials and specified at least one language. Multiple responses were accepted for this item. Thus, the total is greater than 100 percent.

Source: Questionnaire Items 23 and 24.

While few people provide negative ratings, examination of the relationship between ratings of library service and responses to other questions (Table 32) reveals that those who give fair or poor ratings differ from those who give excellent ratings on many dimensions: they use talking books less frequently; they report more problems in several areas; they are less likely to report that orders are filled quickly; they are more likely to report that ordered materials are not available; and they are less likely to appreciate the library selecting books for them. Several characteristics of dissatisfied users also differ from those of satisfied users: they are more likely to read braille, be male, be employed, or be students.

Comments About the Library Service

A word should be said concerning the interpretation of the responses to the open-ended question. The purposes of including a completely open-ended question on a survey instrument are: (1) to give respondents an opportunity to comment or elaborate on any issues which may not have been covered in the structured questions; and (2) to allow respondents to "go beyond" the structured format, to make detailed comments in their own words. Consequently, the analysis of responses to certain types of open-ended questions is somewhat different from that of forced-choice items. Although it is possible to analyze the former statistically, equally useful is the fact that open-ended items provide researchers with a "feel" for the respondents' attitudes. This is particularly true in the case of a question as general as the one reported here.

For these reasons a number of actual comments written by respondents are reported below. Table 33 summarizes the comments by category. Although no single comment should be

TABLE 32

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
RATINGS OF LIBRARY SERVICE
AND RESPONSES TO OTHER QUESTIONS

	Percent of users who report each experience among those who:		
	Give excellent rating	Give good rating	Give fair or poor rating
	%	%	%
Equipment and newsletter			
Have access to TBT player	91	89	86
Use talking books on records very often	70	64	57
Use talking books on cassettes very often	54	52	51
Receive newsletter	66	59	46
Rate newsletter very useful	49	28	19
Problems and experiences[1]			
Receive books with missing or damaged records	3	6	12
Hear other side of tape	4	6	10
Receive cassettes that don't play	4	6	14
Receive cassettes that must be rewound	11	16	25
Receive books with missing cassettes	3	6	9
Have problems finding correct side of cassette	9	13	14
Orders for books filled quickly	79	43	11
Ordered material not available	7	15	38
Like library workers to select books	26	20	15
User characteristics			
Able to read books and magazines in braille	8	10	20
Male	42	42	49
Female	58	58	51
Employed	9	9	16
Stude[illegible]	8	10	14

TABLE 32 (Continued)

User characteristics	Percent of users who report each experience among those who: Give excellent rating	Give good rating	Give fair or poor rating
	%	%	%
Homemaker	16	14	13
Retired	51	49	37
Unemployed	16	18	20
All respondents	58	32	9

[1]For Problems and Experiences, represents percent of respondents who answered question "very often."

Source: Questionnaire Items 26, 9, 11, 18a, 27, 28, 35, and 41.

TABLE 33

RESPONDENTS' COMMENTS ON THE LIBRARY SERVICE

Comment	Percent of Respondents %
Praise, general positive comments	15
Would like new topics	14
Suggestions about shipping materials	10
Suggestions about equipment improvements	7
Comments about making library service easier to use	5
Would like more personal attention	4
Want faster service	3
Comments about mechanical problems	3
Complaints about receiving materials in poor condition	3
Complaints/suggestions about narrators	2
Want more braille materials	1
No comment	46

* Multiple response accepted.

Sources: Questionnaire Item 30.

used to project to the remaining respondents, examples of typical comments made in each category are presented in the following pages. It should be noted that approximately 15 percent of comments were classified as "praise, general positive comments." Comments in this category, which are not cited below, were virtually all short statements such as "service is great," "I really enjoy the books," "personnel are helpful," "I'm so glad to have the service," and so forth.

Reading equipment and material format. Of those readers who have comments, 7 percent suggest improvements in reading equipment. Another 3 percent describe mechanical problems they have in operating equipment. Examples of these comments appear below:

"A variable speed control for the talking book machine should be made available."

"Cassette players should have larger speakers and better tone quality."

"Newer equipment sounds tinny and is of poorer quality than older equipment."

"The cassette machine which uses four different sides is very difficult to use. I find it hard to get it on the right side."

"Since vinyl records, my machine will not handle the records."

"A tone is needed at the beginning of a chapter or section of a book to help locate a desired place in the reading."

"I would like a combination cassette/record player."

"Automatic shut-off on record players." (Mentioned by many respondents.)

"Short descriptions should be written on the container."

"If automatic tone arm can be furnished with talking book machines the record life would be lengthened and playing quality improved."

"The talking book cassettes should be brought up to date. Many of the materials I receive are old, worn-out, scratched, etc."

"Trap door on C-76 model opens much too easily, endangering the machine during delivery."

"Discontinue this statement: Recorded in the studios for the blind. (Touchy subject)."

"I do not like to be forewarned that sex or explicit language is in a book. I am an intelligent adult and I resent being treated as a child or an immature prude."

"The explanatory notes describing books offered are too often wrong, sometimes grossly simple-minded, and misleading."

"Do not want books censored in any way."

"The records and cassettes should have a 'beep' or a 'turn the page' from the narrator to indicate when to turn the page. It is hard to keep the picture and spoken word together."

"Books should be read as written, including strong language, etc...readers should have the choice of ordering."

"Amateur readers who don't meet professional standards should be eliminated."

"Earphone jacks would be better than large head-phones."

"Move into compressed speech for discs and tapes."

"Tape and disc players should be separate. Combining them makes them unhandy to use."

"I am blind and hard of hearing. I have a hearing aid. The cassettes are very hard to hear in general. Women readers are difficult to hear, so this influences how I feel. But I feel that if they don't vary their tones as often, they (women) might be easier to hear. There should be testing with people who do not hear well."

"I prefer records to be recorded at speeds compatible with conventional record players. The '8' is not!"

Additional topics and types of materials. Many respondents express the desire to have more books on certain topics or to have additional special materials (e.g., in languages other than English). In addition, one percent of those commenting would like to have more braille materials. Typical comments of these types are cited below:

"There is too little science fiction."

"There is a great overabundance of light, frivolous books (like romance and western novels) but not enough concentration on serious fiction such as scholarly stories."

"More books with short stories."

"I would like to see more technical materials recorded on tape on demand by skilled technical readers. For example, programming technical manuals."

"Too many dirty books, and good books are disappearing from the lists."

"Additional magazines should be in subscription."

"How about specific courses in journalism, how to go about publishing a book, psychology, anthropology, etc."

"I'd like to see more materials on women and the women's movement."

"I would like to get a complete copy of the Bible so I could listen to it consecutively."

"More religious books/spiritual books." (Mentioned by many respondents.)

"I would like some good old songs and records." (Note: A number of readers expressed a desire to have music on records.)

"I wish they would have updated academic books for use at school in regular classrooms."

Shipment and delivery of materials. A wide variety of comments in this general area were made including 3 percent who want faster service. Examples include the following:

"My only problem is they don't come fast enough. I wish they would send more books more often."

"I would like to have current magazines sent right away when they come out."

"Their system of checking recordings bearing the strings that indicate if something is wrong is lax. They should check because often I have received things that are marked but the defect has not been corrected."

"Please check talking book cases carefully before shipping--check for completeness!"

"Could magazines be shipped in resealable containers?"

"When I order five books, I receive two or three, and what I receive is seldom what I ordered; balance of the order is seldom mailed."

"Personnel at the library are kind and helpful. But I rarely send in book lists because books selected seldom arrive. Apparently there is a chart at the library with my preferences and their substitutions are well-chosen."

"It would be a big help if I could get someone to pick up my used records. It's difficult to go to the post office (especially in winter)."

"A computer bank could provide on-line access to materials. It would cut down in printing and circulation waste and delay. The system would use character-generated format and an ARTS system!"

Ease of library use and personal attention. About 5 percent of the comments made by readers have to do with ways of facilitating usage of the service. Another 4 percent are related specifically to receiving personal attention from the library.

> "No one ever holds him/herself accountable when problems occur--too much buck-passing. I always get the runaround."
>
> "I want to continue having a toll-free number to call the library."
>
> "I would like a representative to visit me."
>
> "You should have people who are there when they are supposed to be and the equipment should be handled by the library rather than the rehabilitation service."
>
> "Libraries should be open on Saturdays."
>
> "More flexible evening hours."
>
> "I dislike someone choosing books for me."
>
> "I would like to see more of it publicized on TV and radio."
>
> "Have materials available through eye doctors' offices."
>
> "When calling the library, I would rather talk to someone personally, not a record. I never receive a response to the recorded message."

Questions about using the service. Most of the comments below were classified into other categories based upon the subject matter. They are cited separately here to indicate that a communication problem appears to exist. Apparently, some readers are not aware of how to obtain service. NLS may wish to consider providing more comprehensive information to new readers or providing subscribers with practical information regarding the service periodically.

"I would like to know how to request that a certain book be recorded."

"How do I get a new needle for my talking book machine?"

"I want to know if I can receive any available books or magazines in large print and want to know more about music materials available."

"I've tried to get some earphones for several years but with no success."

"We would like to consider switching from a manual talking book machine (record player) to cassette tape player provided there is a good selection of material. I need information as to how to bring the change about."

REGIONAL LIBRARY ANALYSIS

Table 34 presents the total number of respondents from each regional library area who returned a completed questionnaire. These figures include both BBR and TBT subscribers. Users of subregonal libraries are included in their regional total.

The responses of users served by a regional library were compared to those of users served by a subregional library. As would be expected, there are no differences in the demographic characteristics of the two subgroups. However, there appear to be differences in some aspects of use of the library and in satisfaction with the library services; these differences are displayed in Tables 35 and 36.

TABLE 34

NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS FROM EACH REGIONAL LIBRARY ADMINISTRATIVE AREA

Regional library	Number of respondents
Montgomery, Alabama	54
Anchorage, Alaska	2
Phoenix, Arizona	50
Little Rock, Arkansas	49
Los Angeles, California	180
Sacramento, California	169
Denver, Colorado	69
Hartford, Connecticut	49
Dover, Delaware	13
Washington, D.C.	25
Daytona Beach, Florida	216
Atlanta, Georgia	68
Honolulu, Hawaii	5
Boise, Idaho	13
Chicago, Illinois	131
Indianapolis, Indiana	78
Des Moines, Iowa	57
Topeka, Kansas	69
Frankfort, Kentucky	59
Baton Rouge, Louisiana	61
Augusta, Maine	26
Baltimore, Maryland	58
Watertown, Massachusetts	90
Wayne, Michigan	15
Lansing, Michigan	125
Faribault, Minnesota	95
Jackson, Mississippi	39
St. Louis, Missouri	68
Helena, Montana	28
Lincoln, Nebraska	46
Carson City, Nevada	11
Concord, New Hampshire	18
Trenton, New Jersey	109
Santa Fe, New Mexico	30
Albany, New York	142
New York, New York	143
Raleigh, North Carolina	88
Cincinnati, Ohio	53
Cleveland, Ohio	136
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma	52
Salem, Oregon	62
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	174

TABLE 34 (Continued)

Regional library	Number of respondents
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	107
San Juan, Puerto Rico	3
Providence, Rhode Island	19
Columbia, South Carolina	42
Pierre, South Dakota	29
Nashville, Tennessee	42
Austin, Texas	154
Salt Lake City, Utah	51
Montpelier, Vermont	14
Richmond, Virginia	90
Seattle, Washington	82
Charleston, West Virginia	34
Milwaukee, Wisconsin	97
Total Respondents	3,789

Users of regional and subregional libraries do not differ in their use of materials or equipment. However, slightly greater proportions of users served by subregional libraries report that they receive a newsletter and that they have visited the library in person. Distance may play a part in the readers' visiting the library; seven out of ten users of regional libraries and five out of ten users of subregional libraries indicate that the library is too far to visit.

The questionnaire included several measures of satisfaction with library services--a direct question which asked respondents to rate the service, several specific questions on problems with equipment and service, and an open-ended question which asked for suggestions on ways to improve library services. The proportion who rate the service as excellent is higher among users served by subregional libraries than among those served by regional libraries. With regard to specific services, 60 percent of regional library users and 70 percent of subregional users indicate that very often their orders are filled quickly. The proportions among users served by subregional libraries who report service, mechanical, or availability problems are always smaller than or equal to the proportions among regional library users. All the proportions are small, however, and the differences could be due to chance.

It is unclear whether the services provided by regional and subregional libraries actually are different. While responses to the rating question and to questions on problems suggest more satisfaction among subregional users, responses to the open-ended question on suggestions for improvements are similar for the two subgroups (Table 36).

TABLE 35

USE OF REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL LIBRARIES

	Regional users	Subregional users
	%	%
Equipment		
Have access to talking book record player	91	91
Have access to talking book cassette player	69	66
Library and newsletter usage		
Have visited in person	12	20
Report no problem in visiting	6	13
Report that library is too far	72	53
Receive a newsletter	61	68
Rate newsletter very useful	38	42

Source: Questionnaire Items 27, 28, 29a and b.

Overall satisfaction and problems[1]		
Rate service excellent [1]	56	68
Rate service poor	2	2
Orders for books filled quickly	60	70
Ordered material not available	13	10
Report problems with missing records	5	3
Receive cassettes that don't play	6	3
Receive cassettes that must be rewound	14	13
Receive books with missing cassettes	5	3

[1]For entries 3-9, represents percent of respondents who answered question with very often.

Source: Questionnaire Items 9, 11, 18a, and 26.

TABLE 36

SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE LIBRARY SERVICES

Suggestion	Regional %	Subregional %
Praised service	15	16
Would like new topics	14	15
Service (material reception) improvements	11	10
Mechanical improvements	7	8
Ways to make library easier to use	5	7
Increase personal attention	3	4
Speed up services	4	3
Mechanical problems	3	3
Received materials in poor condition	3	2

Source: Questionnaire Item 30.

COMPARISON WITH 1968 FINDINGS

The NLS readership was last surveyed twelve years ago. The sample for the 1968 study consisted of 5,000 readers drawn from Talking Book Topics and Braille Book Review subscription lists. Data were collected on many of the same issues as in the present study: reader characteristics, their reading interests, equipment preferences, and assessments of library service.

While comparison of findings from the 1968 and 1979 surveys are of interest, they must be made with caution. For a number of reasons, it is not desirable to conduct extensive statistical analyses comparing the survey findings. The primary reasons are the following:

- Different sampling procedures were used in the two surveys. In 1968, the questionnaires were mailed to 120,000 and 10,000 subscribers to TBT and BBR, respectively. About 25 percent and 17 percent of these two groups returned completed questionnaires, and a sample of 5,000 was then drawn from these returns to form the basis for the analyses. The sampling procedures employed in the current study were somewhat more complex (see detailed discussion in Chapter 2). Because of the different sampling procedures employed, the findings of the two surveys are not directly statistically comparable.

- Different data collection instruments were used in the two surveys. The questionnaire used in the current survey was designed after developmental research and extensive discussions with NLS staff. Many of the issues covered were the same as in the previous survey. However, the wording of the items was not the same, nor were the response categories. Thus, while it is possible to make general comparisons, precise statistical analyses would be appropriate only if the data collection instruments had been identical.

In spite of these facts, it is possible to obtain some useful insights by considering the current survey findings in the context of those of the preceding study. The objective in the following discussion is simply to present a general overview of trends in reader characteristics across time, highlighting any major changes which appear to have occurred.

Reader Characteristics

In Table 37 reader characteristics from the 1968 and 1979 surveys are shown. These figures reveal no sharp changes in the readership over the decade, although some minor shifts appear to have occurred. For example, a higher percentage of readers in the current survey are over age 65. It is possible, however, that this apparent change reflects methodological differences in the two surveys. Because of the follow-up procedures used in the 1979 survey, and because respondents were offered the option of being interviewed by telephone, it is likely that a larger proportion of the elderly readership was interviewed in the current survey than in 1968.

The figures on reader characteristics also indicate several other possible changes between 1968 and 1979. Educational attainment has increased, a fact which is likely to be a mere reflection of a general societal trend. Table 37 also reveals slight changes in the proportions of male and female readers, and in readers' employment status. The higher proportion of females and of retired/unemployed persons in the 1979 sample is also likely to be related to the age distribution in the sample. Again, it is not possible to determine the extent to which survey procedures contributed to this finding.

TABLE 37

COMPARISON OF READER CHARACTERISTICS: 1968 and 1979

Characteristic:	1968 Sample %	1979 Sample %
Age		
Under 14	5	5
15 -24	12	6
25-44	14	14
45-64	26	24
65 and over	43	50
Sex		
Male	46	43
Female	54	57
Educational attainment		
Less than 8 years	29	21
High school	42	35
College	40	45*
Current employment status		
Employed	12	10
Student	14	9
Homemaker	20	15
Retired/unemployed	53	66
Living arrangements		
Alone	17	22
With family or friends	76	69
Institution	7	9
Type of handicap		
Visual only	72	64
Physical only	4	7
Multiple	25	29

*Includes respondents completing graduate, professional, trade, technical, or vocational school.

Use of Library Services and Equipment

In general, there do not appear to have been major changes in use patterns across the decade. The most evident change is the increased use of cassette players, which of course reflects the fact that this type of equipment was not available to NLS users during the early 1960s. Therefore, of the 1968 sample, only 4 percent reported having access to a cassette player. By 1979 about two-thirds of those surveyed had access to these machines.

Methods by which readers first learn of the library service are shown in Table 38. It appears that current readers are more likely than previous users to have heard about NLS through a school, institution, medical source, or library. Perhaps the most striking finding is that, in spite of increased efforts to disseminate information about NLS through the mass media, few readers mentioned these as their first source of information on NLS. This fact should not be interpreted as a negative reflection on NLS publicity efforts, however. It is quite possible that some friends and relatives of blind and handicapped persons do learn of NLS from brochures, public service ads, and so forth, and they then pass this information on. As noted in the table, friends and relatives are the primary sources of initial information about NLS.

As the figures in the bottom half of Table 38 indicate, readers' assessments of the library service have remained fairly consistent over the past years. Both surveys revealed high levels of satisfaction, with more than nine out of ten respondents in each survey rating the service good or very good/excellent.

TABLE 38

USAGE OF LIBRARY SERVICES: 1968 and 1979

	1968 Sample %	1979 Sample %
How readers first learned of NLS		
Friend or relative	51	37
School, library, hospital, other organization or institution	43	57
Printed or electronic media	6	4
Other sources	n/a*	3
Rating of library service		
Very good/excellent	62	58
Good	32	32
Fair	n/a	8
Poor	4	2
No opinion	3	n/a

*n/a denotes not available.

PROFILES OF USER SUBGROUPS

YOUNG READERS (UNDER AGE 25)

Readers under age 25 comprise only about 11 percent of NLS users, but they are distinctive in many ways. Because NLS may wish to develop services aimed specifically at meeting their special needs, these younger readers warrant detailed examination.

Characteristics and Needs of Young Readers

Characteristics of younger readers are shown in Table 39. As these figures reveal, the subgroups of younger readers include slightly more males and minorities than does the general readership. As would be expected, a majority of very young readers are students (as many as 95 percent for the 10-14 subgroup) and few live in institutions. Younger readers, particularly those under the age of 15, tend to come from families with higher annual incomes than is the case for NLS readers as a whole. Finally, there is a somewhat higher proportion of physically handicapped persons in the younger subgroups than in the general readership.

Younger readers' reading materials and equipment needs differ somewhat from those of the general readership. In addition to being related to age, this fact also reflects the slightly higher proportion of physically handicapped and mentally impaired persons in the younger subgroups. Both disc players and cassette players are used by younger readers; they are also heavy users of braille materials (young braille readers are discussed at greater length in the section on the braille readership). Twenty percent of readers aged 10 to 24 can read braille books and magazines as compared to 10 percent of the general readership who can do so.

TABLE 39

CHARACTERISTICS OF YOUNG READERS

Characteristic:	Percent of respondents by age			
Type of handicap	Under 10	10-14	15-24	TBT sample
	%	%	%	%
Visual	60	51	59	64
Physical	11	18	17	7
Learning disability	4	7	6	1
Sex				
Male	56	63	61	43
Female	44	37	39	57
Race				
White	96	86	89	93
Non-white	4	13	11	6
Institutionalized	4	4	9	9
Students	82	95	59	9
Annual family income				
Under $5,000	8	16	31	37
$5,000 - 9,999	21	16	14	28
$10,000 - 14,999	26	17	17	15
$15,000 - 19,999	18	17	16	10
$20,000 - 29,999	18	25	12	6
$30,000 or more	10	10	10	5

Reading Interests of Young Readers

The reading interests of younger NLS readers parallel those of non-handicapped young persons in the same age groups. Table 40 shows the percentages of young readers who ranked various topics as very important and not at all important to them. For the youngest group (readers under age 10), animal and wildlife books are the most desired, followed by humor, adventure, and music books; all of these topics are considered very important by more than half of these youngest respondents. However, very young readers are more likely than older readers to attach a rating of very important to topics. Eleven topics are labeled as very important by at least four out of ten of these readers.

Respondents between the ages of 10 and 14 report many of the same interests as those in the youngest subgroup. Science, humor, and adventure books are rated as very important to about half of the respondents in this age group. Table 41 shows the percentages of readers between the ages of 10 and 14 who consider each topic to be very important.

Reading interests of the subgroup aged 15 to 24 differ from those of the younger subgroups. Only three topics -- humor, bestsellers, and detective/mystery -- are felt to be very important to as many as four out of ten of these readers. Rankings of topics by this age group appear in Table 42.

TABLE 40

READING INTERESTS OF READERS UNDER AGE 10
COMPARED TO TOTAL TBT SAMPLE

	Percent rating as "Very important"		Percent rating as "Not at all important"	
	Under 10	TBT sample	Under 10	TBT sample
	%	%	%	%
Topics				
Animal and wildlife	70	26	5	32
Humor	61	44	26	14
Adventure	58	35	21	17
Music	58	28	5	41
Health	48	29	26	34
Historical fiction	47	45	29	20
Detective and mystery	46	38	36	32
Self-help	44	31	22	33
Movies and theater	44	17	30	48
Biography	42	41	16	16
Science fiction	41	18	27	54
Science	39	26	28	37
History	39	38	26	20
Literature	39	37	22	25
Travel	39	35	22	27
Handicapped	39	24	11	39
Religion	35	35	35	32
Hobbies and crafts	32	17	21	53
Psychology	32	18	54	50
Sports	30	16	35	58
Classics	30	29	39	30
Bestsellers	30	47	44	17
Westerns	30	27	30	40
Painting and sculpture	23	6	41	77
Romance	17	32	61	27
Consumer affairs	17	23	50	40
Politics	11	20	67	45

Source: Questionnaire Item 22.

TABLE 41

READING INTERESTS OF READERS AGED 10-14 YEARS
COMPARED TO TOTAL TBT SAMPLE

Topics	Percent rating as "Very important"		Percent rating as "Not at all important"	
	10-14 years	TBT sample	10-14 years	TBT sample
	%	%	%	%
Adventure	54	35	2	17
Science	48	26	19	37
Humor	47	44	4	14
Self-help	46	31	21	33
Detective and mystery	45	38	17	32
Sports	43	16	23	58
Hobbies and crafts	42	17	10	53
Animal and wildlife	42	26	8	32
Historical fiction	38	45	21	20
Science fiction	36	18	26	54
History	36	38	24	20
Classics	36	29	15	30
Biography	35	41	22	16
Bestsellers	34	47	30	17
Literature	34	37	17	25
Religion	32	35	32	32
Westerns	30	27	34	40
Health	30	29	30	34
Music	29	28	29	41
Travel	27	35	23	27
Handicapped	26	24	45	39
Movies and theater	26	17	19	48
Psychology	13	18	58	50
Romance	13	32	51	27
Painting and sculpture	11	6	64	77
Consumer affairs	9	23	67	40
Politics	4	20	72	45

Source: Questionnaire Item 22.

TABLE 42

READING INTERESTS OF READERS AGED 15-24 YEARS
COMPARED TO TOTAL TBT SAMPLE

Topics	Percent rating as "Very important"		Percent rating as "Not at all important"	
	15-24 years	TBT sample	15-24 years	TBT sample
	%	%	%	%
Humor	55	44	12	14
Bestsellers	43	47	14	17
Detective and mystery	41	38	22	32
Science fiction	39	18	27	54
Adventure	38	35	10	17
Science	38	26	29	37
Handicapped	36	24	46	39
Music	36	28	31	41
Self-help	36	31	20	33
Romance	36	32	32	27
Sports	33	16	32	58
Hobbies and crafts	32	17	31	53
Literature	32	37	26	25
History	31	38	31	20
Historical fiction	31	45	20	20
Travel	30	35	20	27
Animal and wildlife	30	26	21	32
Health	29	29	36	34
Classics	28	29	27	30
Movies and theater	27	17	30	48
Biography	26	41	17	16
Religion	26	35	39	32
Westerns	24	27	36	40
Psychology	21	18	45	50
Consumer affairs	14	23	46	40
Painting and sculpture	11	6	69	77
Politics	8	20	61	45

Source: Questionnaire Item 22.

Other Differences Between Young Readers and General Readership

Very young readers (those under age 10) are more likely than older readers to experience certain problems in operating equipment. As Table 43 indicates, 21 percent often have problems finding the correct side of the cassette, 16 percent have problems finding the beginning of a record, and 13 percent often find that operating cassette controls is too strenuous. Again, these problems may reflect the higher proportion of physically handicapped persons in this subgroup. In most other respects, very young readers are similar to the general readership.

Readers aged 10 to 24 experience fewer problems operating equipment than does the general readership. Moreover, they express a greater desire for machines that are easily movable and run on batteries. In addition, these readers more frequently use braille materials and less frequently use talking books on records.

Readers aged 15 to 24 are more critical of library services than is the general readership. While 58 percent of all readers rate the library service as excellent, 41 percent of these readers give an excellent rating. This age group is also more critical of specific service components. Fewer (33 percent compared to 40 percent of the general readership) rate library newsletters as very useful; fewer (47 percent compared with 61 percent) report that orders for books are filled quickly; and more (16 percent versus 13 percent) indicate that ordered materials are often unavailable. Fourteen percent of readers aged 15 to 24 like libraries to select books for them compared to 23 percent of the general readership.

TABLE 43

SELECTED ITEMS FOR WHICH RESPONSES OF YOUNG READERS DIFFER FROM THOSE OF TOTAL READERSHIP

	Percent of readers in each age group			
	Under 10	10 to 14	15 to 24	TBT Sample
	%	%	%	%
Problems which occur very often				
Operating cassette controls too strenuous	13	5	3	3
Finding correct side of cassette	21	5	2	11
Finding beginning of record	16	2	4	9
Reading record labels	6	6	5	21
Machine features rated as very important				
Runs on batteries	40	63	66	37
Easily movable	48	63	64	56
Able to read braille books and magazines	7	21	18	10
Awareness and use of services				
Use books on records very often	67	45	39	67
Use books on cassettes very often	60	57	53	54
Use braille books very often	5	11	7	4
Receive a newsletter	65	58	53	62
Have visited library in person	15	24	18	14
Aware of music service	17	10	19	24
Assessment of library services				
Rate service excellent	57	59	41	58
Rate newsletter very useful	38	48	33	40
Book orders filled quickly very often	71	56	47	61
Ordered material very often not available	9	12	16	13
Like library workers to select books	40	21	14	23
Comments on library service (unaided)				
Praise, general positive comments	5	6	8	15
Would like new topics	16	22	18	14

READERS AGED 25 AND OVER

Age is a major factor which must be taken into account when planning library services over the coming years. The needs and interests of the older subgroups of NLS readers (particularly those aged 65 and over) are in many ways quite distinct from those of younger readers. For this reason, and because they comprise such a large proportion of NLS users, older readers warrant detailed investigation.

In this section, the attitudes and behaviors reported by four separate age groups (25-44, 45-64, 65-79, 80 and over) are presented. The analysis, however, focuses on users aged 65 and over. Characteristics of older readers are shown in Table 44. There are some striking (although not surprising) ways in which very old readers differ from those in the middle age groups. Older readers, for example, are much more likely to be female, reflecting the longer life expectancy of women in the U.S. Whereas the sex ratio is close to being one-to- one for the under-65 subgroups, nearly three-fourths of readers aged 80 and over are women.

The residential status of older NLS readers also differs from that of younger readers. The former are more likely to live alone than are the latter: nearly one-third of all respondents over 65 report that they live alone. Among readers aged 80 and older, about one out of five live in a residential institution.

Very few respondents over age 65 are employed; a majority of persons in these oldest age groups are retired. Fifteen percent of those aged 65 to 79 say they are currently homemakers; for those over 80, this percentage is just 9 percent.

TABLE 44

CHARACTERISTICS OF READERS
AGED 25 YEARS AND OVER

Characteristic:	Percent of respondents by age				
	25-44 years	45-64 years	65-79 years	80 and over	TBT sample
	%	%	%	%	%
Type of handicap					
Visual	66	69	70	55	64
Physical	13	9	3	1	7
Multiple	20	22	28	43	28
Sex					
Male	53	49	38	26	43
Female	47	51	62	74	57
Race					
White	92	91	93	99	93
Non-white	6	9	6	1	6
Residential status					
Lives alone	12	18	32	31	22
Lives with family or friends	84	79	62	48	69
Institutionalized	4	4	6	21	9
Employment status					
Employed	28	16	2	1	10
Student	7	*	--	*	9
Homemaker	19	24	15	9	15
Retired	6	34	75	84	49
Unemployed	39	25	8	6	17

TABLE 44 (Continued)

Characteristic:	Percent of respondents by age				
	25-44 years	45-64 years	65-79 years	80 and over	TBT sample
	%	%	%	%	%
Annual family income					
Under $5,000	31	30	40	50	37
$5,000 - 9,999	24	26	34	30	28
$10,000 - 14,999	18	18	14	11	15
$15,000 - 19,999	12	13	6	5	10
$20,000 - 29,999	9	8	4	2	6
$30,000 or more	6	6	3	2	5
Education					
Grade school or less	16	13	19	24	21
High school	30	39	36	30	35
College	45	39	40	40	37
Trade/Technical school	8	10	6	6	7

*Less than .5 percent

The older age groups also include a larger proportion of persons with multiple handicaps. Most of these are persons with visual impairments combined with physical disabilities associated with aging. Few respondents in the oldest subgroups report having only physical handicaps.

As would be expected, older readers tend to report lower incomes than do younger respondents. Half of those aged 80 and older report annual incomes under $5,000, and only 10 percent of these respondents report incomes of $15,000 or more compared to about 20 percent of the total TBT sample.

Reading interests. Age plays a part in determining topics which readers wish to have. Topics preferred by subgroups of readers over age 24 are shown in Tables 45-48. Comparison of the reading interests of NLS users in the two oldest subgroups shows many similarities. Historical fiction and biography are among the top three topics rated by these readers. Those readers aged 80 and older appear to be slightly less interested in bestsellers than do other readers. Nevertheless, about four out of ten say these books are very important to them. Overall, the reading interests of the oldest readers--as were those of readers in the younger subgroups--are quite diverse.

Other Differences Between Older Readers and General Readership

The types of equipment used by readers in the older subgroups vary, as shown in Table 49. As indicated, most readers do use more than one type of equipment. Use of cassette players decreases with age. Fewer than half of those aged 80 and over report having access to a cassette player.

TABLE 45

READING INTERESTS OF READERS AGED 25-44 YEARS
COMPARED TO TOTAL TBT SAMPLE

Topics	Percent rating as "Very important"		Percent rating as "Not at all important"	
	25-44 years	TBT sample	25-44 years	TBT sample
	%	%	%	%
Bestsellers	54	47	11	17
Humor	40	44	15	14
Classics	39	29	20	30
Self-help	37	31	24	33
History	37	38	19	20
Detective and mystery	36	38	25	32
Handicapped	35	24	25	39
Biography	34	41	14	16
Consumer affairs	32	23	25	40
Religion	32	35	29	32
Literature	31	37	23	25
Adventure	31	35	15	17
Historical fiction	30	45	27	20
Music	29	28	33	41
Science	28	26	24	37
Travel	28	35	28	27
Health	27	29	32	34
Psychology	27	18	38	50
Romance	26	32	27	27
Science fiction	26	18	40	54
Westerns	26	27	38	40
Hobbies and crafts	24	17	40	53
Movies and theater	22	17	36	48
Animal and wildlife	21	26	37	32
Sports	19	16	52	58
Politics	18	20	45	45
Painting and sculpture	7	6	71	77

Source: Questionnaire Item 22.

TABLE 46

READING INTERESTS OF READERS AGED 45-64 YEARS
COMPARED TO TOTAL TBT SAMPLE

Topics	Percent rating as "Very important"		Percent rating as "Not at all important"	
	45-64 years	TBT sample	45-64 years	TBT sample
	%	%	%	%
Bestsellers	51	47	11	17
Historical fiction	48	45	20	20
Humor	46	44	13	14
Literature	39	37	21	25
Detective and mystery	38	38	28	32
History	38	38	18	20
Biography	37	41	16	16
Self-help	37	31	24	33
Religion	36	35	27	32
Travel	35	35	27	27
Adventure	33	35	16	17
Health	33	29	25	34
Handicapped	32	24	30	39
Romance	30	32	29	27
Westerns	29	27	39	40
Music	28	28	41	41
Classics	28	29	28	30
Science	27	26	30	37
Consumer affairs	26	23	30	40
Animal and wildlife	25	26	33	32
Psychology	23	18	43	50
Politics	20	20	39	45
Hobbies and crafts	19	17	46	53
Science fiction	19	18	51	54
Movies and theater	18	17	44	48
Sports	15	16	55	58
Painting and sculpture	5	6	76	77

Source: Questionnaire Item 22.

TABLE 47

READING INTERESTS OF READERS AGED 65-79 YEARS
COMPARED TO TOTAL TBT SAMPLE

Topics	Percent rating as "Very important"		Percent rating as "Not at all important"	
	65-79 years	TBT sample	65-79 years	TBT sample
	%	%	%	%
Historical fiction	52	45	17	20
Bestsellers	47	47	18	17
Biography	43	41	19	16
Humor	42	44	14	14
Detective and mystery	38	38	34	32
Romance	38	32	23	27
History	38	38	22	20
Literature	37	37	28	25
Travel	37	35	27	27
Religion	36	35	35	32
Adventure	32	35	21	17
Health	29	29	36	34
Self-help	28	31	37	33
Music	27	28	44	41
Classics	26	29	38	30
Westerns	26	27	44	40
Animal and wildlife	26	26	32	32
Consumer affairs	25	23	40	40
Politics	24	20	38	45
Science	23	26	40	37
Handicapped	20	24	43	39
Hobbies and crafts	13	17	59	53
Movies and theater	12	17	60	48
Psychology	12	18	56	50
Science fiction	10	18	64	54
Sports	10	16	67	58
Painting and sculpture	5	6	81	77

Source: Questionnaire Item 22.

TABLE 48

READING INTERESTS OF READERS AGED 80 AND OLDER
COMPARED TO TOTAL TBT SAMPLE

Topics	Percent rating as "Very important"		Percent rating as "Not at all important"	
	80 and older	TBT sample	80 and older	TBT sample
	%	%	%	%
Biography	51	41	12	16
Historical fiction	46	45	19	20
History	42	38	18	20
Humor	41	44	16	14
Bestsellers	40	47	24	17
Literature	38	37	27	25
Religion	38	35	32	32
Adventure	37	35	18	17
Travel	37	35	29	27
Romance	34	32	27	27
Detective and mystery	34	38	42	32
Classics	27	29	33	30
Westerns	26	27	42	40
Animal and wildlife	25	26	34	32
Music	25	28	49	41
Politics	21	20	50	45
Health	20	29	43	34
Science	20	26	56	37
Self-help	18	31	51	33
Consumer afairs	15	23	56	40
Movies and theater	11	17	59	48
Handicapped	10	24	58	39
Psychology	10	18	64	50
Sports	8	16	73	58
Science fiction	7	18	72	54
Hobbies and crafts	5	17	75	53
Painting and sculpture	3	6	83	77

Source: Questionnaire Item 22.

TABLE 49

SELECTED ITEMS FOR WHICH RESPONSES OF OLDER READERS DIFFER FROM THOSE OF TOTAL READERSHIP

	Percent of readers in each age group				
	25-44 years	45-64 years	65-79 years	80 and over	TBT sample
	%	%	%	%	%
Access to equipment					
TBT record player	88	90	92	92	90
Cassette player	81	77	64	48	67
Problems which occur very often					
Reading record labels	14	19	24	34	21
Finding beginning of record	5	8	11	11	9
Reading cassette labels	12	16	22	38	18
Figuring out cassette controls	3	5	10	14	7
Finding correct side of cassette	8	10	13	16	11
Attitudes toward narrators					
Always prefer male narrators	13	22	31	46	27
Dislike narrators who use voice characterization	15	18	28	39	25
Dislike narrators with regional accents	14	19	30	38	26
Attitudes toward sex and profanity in fiction					
Profanity should never be used	18	22	31	44	29
Against explicit description of sex	15	19	31	47	28
Machine features rated as very important					
Easily movable	65	63	52	46	56
Battery operated	59	47	28	10	37
Automatic stop	55	63	58	49	57
Variable speeds	45	47	48	41	45

TABLE 49 (Continued)

	Percent of readers in each age group				
	25-44 years	45-64 years	65-79 years	80 and over	TBT sample
	%	%	%	%	%
Awareness and use of services					
Use books on records very often	52	68	74	76	67
Use books on cassettes very often	65	64	52	34	54
Have visited library in person	18	16	12	7	14
Report that physical condition prevents visiting library	8	12	18	32	16
Aware of music service	30	29	25	18	24
Assessment of library services					
Rate service excellent	51	62	60	61	58
Rate newsletter very useful	40	46	38	38	40
Book order filled quickly very often	54	62	64	63	61
Ordered material very often not available	13	12	13	12	13
Like library workers to select books	15	20	28	29	23
Comments on library service (unaided)					
Praise, general positive comments	12	12	19	20	15
Would like new topics	19	15	11	12	14
Suggestions about equipment improvements	11	9	6	3	7
Comments about making library service easier to use	9	7	3	2	5
Want faster service	6	3	3	2	3

Equipment problems reported with greater frequency by older readers also are displayed in Table 49. For respondents in the oldest subgroup, reading the labels on both records and cassettes appears to be a problem. Finding the correct side of the cassette is also sometimes a problem for those over age 80, as is figuring out which controls to use.

Readers' attitudes toward narrators and sexual language become increasingly "conservative" with age. Elderly respondents are more likely to prefer male narrators for all materials. They also dislike narrators who have regional accents or who use different accents or voices for different characters. In addition, readers over the age of 80 tend to oppose the use of profanity and the inclusion of explicit descriptions of sex in fiction books.

Readers between the ages of 25 and 44 appear to be active, involved readers who are somewhat more critical than older readers. These readers are frequent users of books on cassettes, reflecting their desire for equipment which can be easily moved and battery powered. They are more likely to have visited the library in person and to be aware of the music service. Very few readers between the ages of 25 and 44 want the library to select books for them. Readers younger than 44 are less likely to give excellent ratings to the library and more likely to indicate specific dissatisfactions and suggestions.

In contrast, very elderly readers (those age 80 and over) are frequent users of talking books on records but infrequently use cassettes. They are less likely to have visited the library in person, citing physical conditions as the reason why they don't visit. Finally, elderly readers provide excellent ratings for the library service and make positive comments about specific services.

INSTITUTIONALIZED READERS

Characteristics of institutionalized readers are summarized in Table 50. As the figures indicate, persons in this subgroup of users tend to be older than the general user population. In addition, the institutionalized population includes a higher proportion of physically handicapped persons and women. As would be expected, fewer employed persons and homemakers reside in institutions.

The most striking difference between the institutionalized population and the general readership is in income. As shown in Table 50, six out of ten institutionalized readers surveyed report annual incomes under $5,000. Moreover, approximately 80 percent have incomes under $10,000. These facts reflect the age distribution of the institutionalized population, which includes many elderly residents of nursing or retirement homes.

As one would expect, institutionalized readers' preferences for book topics parallel those of older readers. They are most interested in reading biographies, humorous books, historical fiction, bestsellers, and religious books, in that order.

Table 51 presents selected items for which the responses of institutionalized readers are different from those of the total TBT sample. Talking book record players are used more by institutionalized readers than are cassette players. While 86 percent report access to a disc player, only 60 percent have access to a cassette player. The problems which institutionalized readers have in using these machines are related primarily to the fact that these readers tend to be somewhat older and to have more physical impairments. The most frequently mentioned problem with both cassettes and records relates to reading the labels.

TABLE 50

CHARACTERISTICS OF INSTITUTIONALIZED READERS

Characteristics	Institutionalized readers %	TBT sample %
Age		
Under 10	1	1
10 to 14	1	3
15 to 24	7	6
25 to 44	7	14
45 to 64	11	24
65 to 79	20	28
80 and over	52	22
Type of handicap		
Visual	50	64
Physical	10	7
Multiple	40	28
Sex		
Male	34	43
Female	66	57
Employment status		
Employed	4	10
Student	8	9
Homemaker	3	15
Retired	67	49
Unemployed	18	17
Annual family income		
Under $5,000	60	37
$5,000 - 9,999	19	28
$10,000 - 14,999	10	15
$15,000 - 19,999	5	10
$20,000 - 29,999	2	6
$30,000 or more	3	5

TABLE 51

SELECTED ITEMS FOR WHICH RESPONSES OF INSTITUTIONALIZED READERS DIFFER FROM THOSE OF TOTAL READERSHIP

	Institutionalized readers	TBT sample
	%	%
Access to equipment		
TBT record player	86	90
Cassette player	60	67
Problems which occur very often		
Finding beginning of record	13	9
Reading record labels	33	21
Placing discs on player	10	7
Reading cassette labels	25	18
Operating controls too strenuous	9	3
Finding correct side of cassette	14	11
Able to read braille books and magazines	7	10
Attitudes toward narrators		
Always prefer males	38	27
Like narrators who use different voices	48	61
Like narrators who use accents for characters	33	44
Dislike narrators who have accents	35	26
Attitudes toward sex and profanity in fiction		
Profanity should never be used	42	29
Against explicit description of sex	41	28

TABLE 51 (Continued)

	Institutionalized readers	TBT sample
	%	%
Often have help reading		
Personal mail	65	73
Newspapers and magazines	25	43
Books	21	33
Use books on records very often	63	67
Rate library service excellent	53	58
Comments on library service (unaided)		
Praise, general positive comments	18	15
Want faster service	5	3

The age distribution of the institutionalized subgroup also is reflected in these respondents' attitudes toward reading materials; the pattern of responses given to questions in this area is similar to that of the older readers profiled elsewhere in this report. For example, institutionalized readers are more likely to object to the use of strong language and descriptions of sex in fiction books. Approximately four out of ten institutionalized readers believe sex and strong language should never be used in fiction books, compared to approximately three out of ten readers in the TBT sample who feel this way.

Institutionalized readers are particularly reliant upon the NLS, given that they are less likely to have anyone available to read material to them. In spite of this need, they appear to use talking books slightly less frequently than do other readers of the same age, and they are less likely to give excellent ratings to the service.

PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED READERS

Characteristics of readers with only a physical disability are summarized in Table 52. While females outnumber males in the general population, there are more males among the physically handicapped subgroup. These readers also are younger than the general user population and lost the ability to read conventional printed matter at an earlier age.

The differences in employment status between physically handicapped readers and the general user population are also related to age. Three out of ten physically handicapped readers are retired as compared to nearly half of the general user population. Fully 40 percent of this subgroup report that they are unemployed. Of the rest, more physically handicapped respondents say they are students and fewer report being homemakers, reflecting the greater proportion of males in this subgroup.

TABLE 52

CHARACTERISTICS OF PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED READERS

Characteristic	Physically handicapped readers %	TBT sample %
Age		
Under 10	2	1
10 to 14	8	3
15 to 24	15	6
25 to 44	27	14
45 to 64	32	24
65 to 79	12	28
80 and over	4	22
Sex		
Male	58	43
Female	42	57
Age respondent became unable to read regular print		
Less than 10	13	9
10 to 14	4	4
15 to 24	15	7
25 to 44	25	16
45 to 64	34	26
65 to 79	6	26
80 and over	2	12
Employment status		
Employed	7	10
Student	18	9
Homemaker	7	15
Retired	28	49
Unemployed	40	17

TABLE 52 (Continued)

Characteristic	Physically handicapped readers %	TBT sample %
Annual family income		
Less tnan $5,000	32	37
$5,000 - 9,999	23	28
$10,000 - 14,999	17	15
$15,000 - 19,999	15	10
$20,000 - 29,999	10	6
$30,000 or more	3	5
Living arrangements		
Alone	8	22
With family or friends	80	69
Institution	12	9

The high proportion of unemployed respondents suggests that readers with physical handicaps may be more severely handicapped than the general user population. Consistent with this, the proportion who live alone is much smaller for this subgroup than for the general user population. The larger proportion residing with family or friends may result from the fact that they tend to be younger persons. However, more physically handicapped readers also report residing in institutions despite the younger average age of this subgroup.

Physically handicapped readers are more interested in books on the handicapped than are other readers. Forty-four percent of this group rate this topic as very important compared to 25 percent of the total TBT sample. Otherwise, physically handicapped readers share the interests of other readers of the same age and sex.

Table 53 presents selected items for which the responses of physically handicapped readers differ from those of other readers. Physically handicapped readers use talking book players less frequently and cassette players more frequently than do other readers. As would be expected, these readers have few problems reading labels on records or cassettes. Instead, their physical condition leads to more problems placing discs on the record players and operating the cassette controls. An automatic stop feature is considered very important by nearly two out of every three physically handicapped readers.

More physically handicapped readers (16%) have been using the library for less than one year, while fewer (11%) have been using the services for ten years or longer. Of course, physically handicapped persons were not eligible to use the NLS until 1966.

TABLE 53

SELECTED ITEMS FOR WHICH RESPONSES OF PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED READERS DIFFER FROM THOSE OF TOTAL READERSHIP

	Physically handicapped readers	TBT sample
	%	%
Access to equipment		
TBT record player	81	90
Cassette player	72	67
Problems which occur very often		
Reading record labels	4	21
Placing discs on player	11	7
Reading cassette labels	2	18
Figuring out controls	1	7
Operating cassette controls too strenuous	18	3
Machine features rated as very important		
Automatic stop	64	57
Variable speeds	35	45
Battery operated	42	37
Awareness and use of services		
Use books on records very often	51	67
Use books on cassettes very often	59	54
Have visited library in person	10	14
Physical condition prevents visiting	28	16
Have used library less than 1 year	16	12
Have used library for 10 years or longer	11	21
Assessment of library services		
Rate service excellent	62	58
Rate newsletter very useful	48	40
Book orders filled quickly very often	63	61
Ordered material very often not available	11	13
Praised service	9	15

Overall, physically handicapped users are at least as satisfied with the service as are other users. Sixty-two percent of respondents rate the service excellent. Most physically handicapped readers make no comment in response to the open-ended question about services. Of those who do, the comments are comparable to those of other readers.

BRAILLE READERS

Characteristics of braille readers are summarized in Table 54. Ninety percent of braille readers have a visual handicap only compared to 64 percent of the TBT sample.

The two groups do not differ with regard to sex or race, but braille readers are considerably younger than the TBT sample. Half of the braille readers are between the ages of 15 and 44, and fewer than one out of every five is over age 65. By contrast, half of the TBT sample is over 65. Consistent with the age differences, the proportion of students or employed persons is at least twice as great among braille readers as in the TBT sample. In the TBT sample, half the respondents are retired while fewer than one of every five braille respondents fall into this category.

Braille readers also have more education than the TBT sample. One of every two braille readers has attended or graduated from college or has graduate training. Only one in every three in the TBT sample has a similar level of education. Possibly because of these differences in age, education, and employment status, the braille readers also have slightly higher incomes.

TABLE 54

CHARACTERISTICS OF BRAILLE READERS

Characteristic	Braille readers %	TBT sample %
Type of handicap		
Visual only	90	64
Physical	*	7
Multiple	9	28
Age		
Under 14	5	5
15 to 44	50	21
45 to 64	28	24
65 and over	17	50
Sex		
Male	43	43
Female	57	57
Age respondent became unable to read regular print		
Less than 10	63	9
10 to 14	8	4
15 to 24	9	7
25 to 44	12	16
45 to 64	6	26
65 to 79	1	26
80 and over	*	12
Employment status		
Employed	30	10
Student	18	9
Homemaker	15	15
Retired	18	49
Unemployed	19	17

TABLE 54 (Continued)

Characteristic	Braille readers %	TBT sample %
Education		
Grade school or less	10	21
High school	32	35
College	51	37
Trade/Technical school	8	7
Annual family income		
Under $5,000	31	37
$5,000 - 9,999	23	28
$10,000 - 14,999	17	15
$15,000 - 19,999	12	10
$20,000 - 29,999	11	6
$30,000 or more	6	5
Living arrangements		
Alone	22	22
With family or friends	74	69
Institution	5	9

*Less than .5 percent

The most striking difference in the two samples is the age at which the respondent first lost the ability to read conventional printed material. In the TBT sample, only one in five became unable to read before the age of twenty-five, and nearly two out of every five became unable to read conventional printed matter after the age of 65. In contrast, three out of every five braille readers have been without the ability to read conventional material since they were younger than age ten.

Reading interests of braille readers are displayed in Table 55. These interests are similar to those found in the TBT sample. As has been mentioned, braille readers are younger and better educated than the TBT sample. These differences are reflected in reading preferences. Like more educated readers in the TBT sample, braille readers most often indicate that bestsellers, literature, and classics are very important to them. Like other young readers, braille readers give very important ratings to more topics than do other readers.

Other Differences Between Braille Readers and General Readership

Table 56 presents selected items for which the responses of braille readers differ from those of other readers. Braille readers use braille materials in addition to, rather than instead of, records and cassettes. They are more likely than other readers to report access to record players and cassettes. Braille readers feel it is important to have equipment which is easily moved and runs on batteries. This preference may explain why they use talking books on records slightly less often than do other readers, while they use talking books on cassettes about as often as other readers do. Nearly half the braille readers report that they use braille books and magazines very often.

TABLE 55

READING INTERESTS OF BRAILLE READERS
COMPARED TO TOTAL TBT SAMPLE

Topics	Percent rating as "Very important"		Percent rating as "Not at all important"	
	Braille readers	TBT sample	Braille readers	TBT sample
	%	%	%	%
Bestsellers	52	47	11	17
Literature	47	37	18	25
Classics	43	29	18	30
History	40	38	20	20
Biography	39	41	14	16
Humor	39	44	16	14
Historical fiction	39	45	25	20
Self-help	39	31	25	33
Romance	37	32	21	27
Religion	36	35	31	32
Detective/mystery	35	38	27	32
Science	35	26	28	37
Adventure	35	35	17	17
Health	35	29	27	34
Travel	33	35	24	27
Music	31	28	37	41
Handicapped	29	24	30	39
Consumer affairs	28	23	32	40
Psychology	28	18	36	50
Science fiction	26	18	43	54
Animal and wildlife	22	26	32	32
Politics	22	20	41	45
Hobbies and crafts	21	17	40	53
Westerns	21	27	42	40
Movies and theater	18	17	40	48
Sports	15	16	51	58
Painting and sculpture	7	6	76	77

Source: Questionnaire Item 22.

TABLE 56

SELECTED ITEMS FOR WHICH RESPONSES OF BRAILLE READERS DIFFER FROM THOSE OF TOTAL READERSHIP

	Braille readers	TBT sample
	%	%
Access to equipment		
TBT record player	92	90
Cassette player	85	67
Awareness and use of services		
Use books on records very often	57	67
Use books on cassettes very often	58	54
Use braille books very often	48	4
Use braille magazines very often	47	4
Have visited library in person	25	14
Physical condition prevents visiting	3	16
Have used library less than 3 years	[illegible]	45
Have used library 10 years or more	75	21
Aware of music service	64	24
Machine features rated as very important		
Easily moved	64	56
Runs on batteries	60	37
Automatic stop	56	57
Variable speeds	54	45
Problems which occur very often		
Receive books with missing or damaged records	8	5
Receiving cassettes that must be rewound	17	14
Receiving cassettes that don't play	9	6
Hearing other side in background	8	5
Receiving books with missing cassettes	5	5
Reading record labels	4	21
Placing discs on player	4	7
Finding beginning of record	3	9
Reading cassette labels	8	18
Finding correct side of cassette	4	11
Getting tapes tangled	4	4
Figuring out cassette controls	3	7
Operating cassette controls too strenuous	1	3

TABLE 56 (Continued)

	Braille readers %	TBT sample %
Attitudes toward narrators		
Always prefer males	18	27
Like narrators who use different voices	70	61
Dislike narrators who use accents for different characters	15	25
Dislike narrators with accents	17	26
Attitudes toward sex and profanity in fiction		
Profanity should never be used	19	29
Against explicit descriptions of sex	17	28
Assessment of library services		
Rate service excellent	42	58
Rate newsletter very useful	33	40
Book orders filled quickly very often	54	61
Ordered material very often not available	14	13
Never like library workers to select books	37	34
Comments on library service (unaided)		
Praise, general positive comments	7	15
Would like new topics	19	14
Suggestions for equipment improvements	13	7
Want more braille materials	17	1
Suggestions about shipping materials	14	10

Seventy-five percent of braille readers have been using the NLS for ten years or longer. They are more likely than other library users to visit their library in person and to be aware of the music service.

With regard to reporting problems with the equipment, braille readers contrast with other readers in an interesting way. Braille readers are more likely to report problems of a service nature (e.g. receiving books with missing records). In contrast, they are less likely to report problems in operating equipment. For the TBT sample it was noted that older respondents report more operating problems than do younger readers and that long-time users tend to report more service and technical problems than do those who have been using the service for a shorter time. The younger age and longer use among braille respondents probably contribute to their pattern of response in reporting problems. However, when age is held constant, the differences between braille and other readers persist.

In general, braille readers are active, frequent users of the NLS. They appear to have higher expectations than other users and to be more critical of the services they receive. They are less likely to give excellent ratings to the service and more likely to offer specific suggestions for improvements.

HEARING IMPAIRED READERS

Characteristics of hearing impaired readers are summarized in Table 57. Fully 78 percent of hearing impaired readers are 65 years old or older, which explains why 61 percent are women. More than half of these readers became unable to read conventional printed material after the age of 65. Considering their ages, it is not surprising that 76 percent are retired.

TABLE 57

CHARACTERISTICS OF HEARING IMPAIRED READERS

Characteristic	Hearing impaired readers %	TBT sample %
Age		
Under 14	3	5
15 to 44	5	21
45 to 64	13	24
65 and over	78	50
Sex		
Male	39	43
Female	61	57
Age respondent became unable to read regular print		
Between 65 and 79	31	26
After 80	22	12
Education		
Grade school or less	24	21
High school	26	35
College	39	37
Trade/Technical school	10	7
Annual family income		
Under $5,000	43	37
$5,000 - 9,999	31	28
$10,000 - 14,999	12	15
$15,000 - 19,999	7	10
$20,000 - 29,999	4	6
$30,000 or more	2	5
Living arrangements		
Alone	25	22
With family or friends	61	69
Institution	14	9

Hearing impaired readers have educational levels similar to those of other readers. However, reflecting the higher proportion of the elderly, retirees, and women among hearing impaired readers, 43 percent have incomes under $5,000. Fourteen percent reside in institutions.

The reading interests of hearing impaired readers do not differ from those of other readers of the same age and sex. As shown in Table 58, use of services is also comparable to that of other elderly users. Hearing impaired readers use books on records very often and are less likely to use books on cassettes. They are more likely than other readers to use magazines on records.

The advanced age and multiple handicaps of these readers contribute to relatively frequent problems in operating equipment. Reading labels, finding the correct side of the cassette, and figuring out the cassette controls cause problems most frequently.

Hearing impaired readers have strong attitudes toward narrators, preferring a straightforward reading of material by a male narrator. Undoubtedly, such narration is easier for these readers to understand. Hearing impaired readers desire equipment with variable speeds.

In spite of their difficulties, hearing impaired readers appear to be quite satisfied with the service they receive from their regional or subregional library. Sixty-two percent rate the service excellent, and 21 percent of those who make comments praise the library or provide other positive comments.

TABLE 58

SELECTED ITEMS FOR WHICH RESPONSES OF HEARING IMPAIRED READERS DIFFER FROM THOSE OF TOTAL READERSHIP

	Hearing impaired readers	TBT sample
	%	%
Access to equipment		
TBT record player	92	90
Cassette player	56	67
Awareness and use of services		
Use books on records very often	72	67
Use books on cassettes very often	41	54
Use magazines on records very often	48	40
Aware of music service	21	24
Have visited library in person	9	14
Physical condition prevents visiting	29	16
Problems which occur very often		
Finding beginning of record	12	9
Reading record labels	28	21
Placing discs on player	11	7
Figuring out cassette controls	14	7
Reading cassette labels	21	18
Finding correct side of cassette	18	11
Attitudes toward narrators		
Always prefer males	49	27
Like narrators who use different voices	52	61
Dislike narrators who use accents for different characters	44	25
Dislike narrators with accents	44	26
Machine features rated as very important		
Variable speeds	57	45
Runs on batteries	24	37
Assessment of library services		
Rate service excellent	62	58
Praise, general positive comments	21	15

NON-WHITE READERS

Figures reported in Reading with Print Limitations Executive Summary indicated that 21 percent of potential users of the NLS are non-white. Only 7 percent of the sample of respondents in this survey are non-white. It is useful to examine the characteristics and experiences of this subgroup for clues as to how the NLS might increase the number of non-whites who use the library. The reader should be cautioned that percentages presented in this section are based on relatively small numbers. One hundred eighty-four black users and thirty-six Hispanics responded to this survey. The base for estimating reading interests is reduced even further since the list of 27 topics was divided into two shorter lists, each of which was presented to half the sample. Thus, each topic was rated by only half the respondents.

Characteristics of black, white, and Hispanic readers are presented in Table 59. There are fewer users over age 65 and more males among both black and Hispanic readers than among the white user population. Blacks and Hispanics are more likely to have only a grade school education and less likely to have attended college. Reflecting the age differences, there are fewer retired readers among the non-white user population. More non-whites than whites indicate they are unemployed.

Black readers have much lower annual incomes than do other users, with 60 percent reporting incomes under $5,000. Among Hispanics there are more very poor respondents than among whites, but there are also more respondents who report an annual income of $20,000 or more. While black and white respondents do not differ in their living arrangments, Hispanics are much more likely to live with family or friends and less likely to live alone or in institutions.

TABLE 59

CHARACTERISTICS OF READERS OF THREE ETHNIC GROUPS

Characteristic	Black %	White %	Hispanic %
Age			
Under 14	7	4	11
15 to 44	22	20	42
45 to 64	34	24	33
65 and over	36	52	14
Sex			
Male	45	42	66
Female	55	58	34
Education			
Grade school or less	34	20	34
High school	35	35	43
College	21	38	20
Trade/Technical school	9	7	3
Employment status			
Employed	7	10	14
Student	15	8	20
Homemaker	12	15	11
Retired	30	50	23
Unemployed	35	16	31
Annual family income			
Under $5,000	60	35	45
$5,000 - 9,999	20	28	19
$10,000 - 14,999	8	16	10
$15,000 - 19,999	7	10	6
$20,000 - 29,999	3	6	13
$30,000 or more	1	5	6
Living arrangements			
Alone	23	23	11
With family or friends	70	68	86
Institution	7	9	3

Reading interests of the three ethnic user groups are presented in Table 60. The most striking difference between black readers and other readers is the tendency among black readers to rate more topics as very important. Among white respondents, the most popular topic was rated as very important by 47 percent of readers. Among black respondents, ten topics are rated very important by at least 50 percent of readers. Ten other topics receive very important ratings from at least one of every three black readers. Books on self-help, religion, the handicapped, and health are desired by the greatest numbers of black readers. Detective and mystery, biography, self-help, and travel are the most popular topics among Hispanics. The age, sex and education differences between whites and non-whites contribute to the differences in reading interests.

Table 61 presents items for which responses differ depending on ethnic group membership. Hispanics are more likely to have a record player and a cassette player than are whites. Blacks are just as likely as whites to have a record player but slightly less likely to have a cassette player. This is somewhat surprising given that black respondents consider several features of the cassette machines (i.e. easily moved, runs on batteries) to be very important.

There are no meaningful differences in equipment problems reported by members of the three ethnic groups.

Blacks and Hispanics are generally as tolerant or more tolerant than whites regarding characteristics of narrators and inclusion of sex in fiction. Blacks, however, are less likely to indicate that they like narrators to use accents for different characters. Hispanics disapprove of the use of profanity in fiction.

TABLE 60

READING INTERESTS OF READERS IN THREE ETHNIC GROUPS

Topics	Percent rating as "Very important"			Percent rating as "Not at all important"		
	Black	White	Hispanic	Black	White	Hispanic
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Self-help	71	28	47	5	35	21
Religion	68	33	41	15	32	29
Handicapped	61	22	37	9	41	10
Health	60	27	29	11	35	35
Humor	58	44	29	12	13	47
Bestsellers	54	47	29	14	17	35
Detective and mystery	53	37	53	24	32	35
Adventure	52	34	29	12	17	29
History	51	37	29	15	21	24
Music	51	27	37	19	42	32
Literature	44	36	39	24	25	28
Consumer affairs	41	22	28	21	42	44
Biography	41	41	50	20	16	17
Historical fiction	39	45	41	33	19	12
Travel	39	34	47	25	27	21
Hobbies and crafts	38	16	32	32	54	26
Movies and theater	38	16	12	27	49	41
Classics	36	29	29	26	30	41
Sports	32	15	24	31	60	35
Psychology	32	16	35	35	51	41
Science fiction	29	17	29	37	55	29
Westerns	28	26	41	45	40	41
Animal and wildlife	27	26	26	42	31	21
Politics	27	20	6	38	45	61
Science	23	26	33	30	38	11
Romance	22	33	28	38	27	22

Source: Questionnaire Item 22.

TABLE 61

SELECTED ITEMS FOR WHICH RESPONSES DIFFER
DEPENDING ON ETHNIC GROUP

	Black readers	White readers	Hispanic readers
	%	%	%
Access to equipment			
Record player	93	90	97
Cassette player	61	68	80
Machine features rated as very important			
Easily moved	73	55	67
Automatic stop	68	56	79
Variable speeds	60	44	55
Runs on batteries	59	36	59
Like narrators who use accents for different characters	34	45	53
Profanity should never be used in fiction	25	29	39
Able to use some braille	27	18	42
Awareness and use of services			
Use books on records very often	70	67	48
Use books on cassettes very often	50	54	56
Aware of music service	23	24	17
Have visited library in person	13	14	20
Assessment of library services			
Rate service excellent	57	58	56
Rate newsletter very useful	55	39	48
Like library workers to select books	39	23	9
Book orders filled quickly very often	62	61	51
Ordered material very often not available	9	13	9
Like reading material in other languages	14	9	56

TABLE 61 (Continued)

	Black readers	White readers	Hispanic readers
	%	%	%
Non-use			
Have not used for 12 months	16	5	14
Not interested in available topics	17	8	20
Haven't received materials ordered	17	10	20
Unable to read braille	12	4	20
How users first heard of NLS			
Friend or relative	17	38	17
Organization which serves blind or handicapped	51	34	60
Public library	2	5	6
Social service organization	6	2	3

Twenty-seven percent of black respondents and 42 percent of Hispanics have some fluency in braille as opposed to 18 percent of white readers.

Blacks appear to use the NLS with about the same frequency as whites do. Hispanics use talking books on records slightly less, are less likely to be aware of the music service, and are more likely to visit the library in person.

Overall, satisfaction with the NLS appears to be as great or greater among current black users as it is among whites. Hispanics are slightly less positive than others regarding the time it takes for book orders to be filled. As would be expected, non-English reading materials are desired by a majority of Hispanic readers.

While current non-white users appear satisfied, there are some interesting ethnic differences among respondents who have not used the NLS during the year preceding the survey. A screening item on the questionnaire asked respondents whether they have used books or magazines from the library during the past twelve months. Sixteen percent of black respondents and 14 percent of Hispanics had not used library materials as compared to only 6 percent of whites. The most frequent reasons given by non-whites for not using the library are lack of interest in the topics available, not receiving materials ordered, and being unable to read braille.

Also of interest are ethnic differences in users' introduction to the NLS. While 38 percent of whites first learned of the library from friends or relatives, 17 percent of non-whites were introduced to the NLS in this manner. Non-whites are much more likely to have heard of the NLS through an organization which serves the blind or handicapped.

DETAILED FINDINGS: NETWORK LIBRARY SURVEY

PATRON CHARACTERISTICS AND BEHAVIOR

The responses of librarians to questions about their patrons' characteristics and library usage are presented in this section. In some cases, responses to similar items from the users themselves are also included. The latter are presented for purposes of general comparison only. In making such comparisons, the reader should bear in mind the methodological differences between the surveys of users and of librarians. While data from the users' survey reflect the responses of 44 percent of a sample of users, questionnaires were completed by 141 out of the 159 librarians, a total of 88 percent.

Librarians were asked about the types of handicaps that characterize their patrons. Before providing this information, they were asked whether their records enable them to determine what percentage of their patrons have each type of handicap. The 71 librarians who had this capability were then asked to indicate the percentage of patrons having each type of handicap. Table 62 shows the responses of these librarians; librarians unable to provide these data have been excluded in calculating these percentages.

As the figures in Table 62 indicate, librarians report blindness (as a sole handicap) as their patrons' most common disability. Persons with physical handicaps, on the other hand, are reported to make up smaller percentages of patrons. Nearly half of librarians providing this information indicate that under 20 percent of their readership is comprised of persons with only physical handicaps. Likewise, persons with multiple handicaps are reported to constitute a small

TABLE 62

LIBRARIANS' ESTIMATES OF READERSHIP BY TYPE OF HANDICAP

Legally blind only Percent of patrons	Percent of Responding Libraries
Less than 30%	20
30-49%	18
50-69%	28
70-89%	28
90% or more	6

Physically handicapped only Percent of patrons	Percent of Responding Libraries
Less than 10%	16
10-19%	32
20-29%	25
30-39%	9
40-49%	4
50-59%	9
60% or more	4

Visual handicap (not legally blind) Percent of patrons	Percent of Responding Libraries
Less than 10%	8
10-19%	28
20-29%	20
30-39%	8
40-49%	10
50-59%	13
60% or more	13

Multiple handicapped Percent of patrons	Percent of Responding Libraries
Less than 10%	67
10-19%	30
20-29%	3

Learning disability Percent of patrons	Percent of Responding Libraries
Less than 10%	72
10-19%	23
20-29%	4

Source: Questionnaire Item 15b.

percentage of the NLS readership. A comparison of these findings with those of the users' survey reveals that most libraries appear to underestimate the extent of multiple and physical handicaps among their patrons.

Librarians were asked what special activities they carry out to locate and serve persons with physical handicaps and with learning disabilities. As shown in Table 63, the most frequent activity undertaken is talking with groups which serve these special populations. Newspaper articles, radio spots, and newsletters, in that order, also are used, particularly to reach the physically handicapped.

Nearly one-fourth of the librarians surveyed indicate they contact special education teachers, schools, and parents in an attempt to reach persons with learning disabilities. In addition, brochures, displays, and workshops aimed at the learning disabled are undertaken by about 6 percent of the libraries; 11 percent conduct similar activities directed toward the physically handicapped.

A separate set of questionnaire items concerned patrons with temporary disabilities and institutionalized patrons. Librarians were asked to estimate the number of their active patrons falling into each of these categories. Responses are shown in Tables 64 and 65. By way of comparison, in the users' survey, 9 percent of the TBT sample reported that they live in an institution. Data on the incidence of temporary disabilities were not collected in the users' survey.

Librarians were asked if they follow any special procedures for institutionalized patrons. As Table 64 shows, about one-third of the librarians have no special procedures for serving patrons who live in institutions. Another one-third indicate they set up deposit collections for these

TABLE 63

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY NETWORK LIBRARIES

Activities to serve physically handicapped	Percent of Responding Libraries*
Talks with groups serving these persons	89
Newspaper articles	61
Radio spots	52
Newsletters	43
Brochures/displays/workshops	11
TV ads/talk shows	4
Hospital/medical contacts	2
Do nothing special	2
Do not single out specific handicaps	2
All other activities	8

Activities to serve the learning disabled	Percent of Responding Libraries*
Talk with groups serving these persons	82
Newspaper articles	43
Radio spots	36
Newsletters	29
Contact with special education teachers	13
Contact with schools/parents	10
Do nothing special	7
Brochures/displays/workshops	6
Do not single out specific handicaps	2
All other activities	1

Source: Questionnaire Items 16a and b.

* Multiple responses were accepted on these items.

TABLE 64

PROVIDING SERVICE TO INSTITUTIONALIZED PATRONS

Estimated percent of active readers who live in institutions	Percent of Responding Libraries*
Less than 10%	51
10-19%	26
20-29%	15
30-39%	4
40% or more	4

Special procedures used to serve institutionalized patrons	Percent of Responding Libraries*
Circulate materials directly to patrons	52
Deliver materials by mail	47
Set up deposit collections	34
Follow no special procedures	32
Deliver materials personally	11
Meet/work with institutional staff	6
All other procedures	7

Source: Questionnaire Items 13a and b.

* Multiple responses were accepted on this item.

patrons, and slightly more than half report they circulate materials directly to these individuals. Eleven percent of librarians say their libraries deliver materials personally to institutionalized patrons, and about 6 percent say they work with the staffs at institutions in an effort to serve this special population. (Note that multiple responses were accepted for this questionnaire item.)

Librarians' estimates of the percentage of their readers who are temporarily disabled are shown at the top of Table 65. The remainder of this table shows responses to questions concerning methods of serving these individuals. As the figures indicate, librarians report that very small percentages of their patrons are temporarily disabled; more than 90 percent of librarians believe that less than 10 percent of their patrons fall into this category. As the figures further indicate, materials are circulated to these persons primarily through the mail (91 percent of libraries do so) and through institutions (64 percent of libraries). The major activity undertaken to reach these persons is talking with groups which serve the temporarily disabled. Newspaper articles, radio spots, and newsletters also are used.

Librarians also were asked about patrons' personal visits to the libraries. Their estimates of the number of patrons visiting the library in person each week are shown in Table 66. The data reported in the top half of this table are consistent with findings from the users' survey, in that fairly low numbers of patrons are reported to make personal visits to their libraries. As reported in Table 14, only 14 percent of users surveyed said they visited their libraries in person. As would be expected, based upon this finding, nearly two-thirds of the libraries surveyed report less than eleven patron visits per week; in fact, about 40 percent report that five or fewer patrons visit the library in an average week.

TABLE 65

PROVIDING SERVICE TO TEMPORARILY DISABLED

Estimated percent of active readers with temporary disabilities	Percent of Responding Libraries
Less than 10%	92
10-19%	8

Methods of providing reading materials	Percent of Responding Libraries*
Circulate materials through mail	91
Circulate materials through institutions	64
Deliver materials personally	16
Encourage patrons to pick-up materials at library	6
Family and/or friends pick-up materials	5
All other methods	4

Special activities undertaken	Percent of Responding Libraries*
Talk with groups serving these persons	75
Newspaper articles	51
Radio spots	44
Newsletters	38
Brochures/displays/workshops	8
Do nothing special	7
Hospital/medical contact	6
TV ads/talk shows	3
All other activities	8

Source: Questionnaire Items 14a, b and c.

* Multiple responses were accepted on these items.

TABLE 66

FREQUENCY OF PATRONS' PERSONAL VISITS TO LIBRARIES
(Librarians' Estimates)

Estimated number of patrons visiting each week	Percent of Responding Libraries
Less than two patrons	11
2-5 patrons	28
6-10 patrons	25
11-15 patrons	16
16-20 patrons	2
More than 20 patrons	16

Opinions as to why patrons do not visit their libraries	Percent of Responding Libraries*
Transportation problems	84
Library is too far from patrons' homes	71
Postal service is adequate	69
Library is not barrier free	13
Patrons' health/physical condition prevents visiting	9
No browsing possible at library	7
Poor location/parking at library	4
Phone service is adequate	4
No reading room/limited space at library	3
All other reasons	4

Source: Questionnaire Items 17a and b.

* Multiple responses were accepted on these items.

Librarians' opinions about why patrons do not visit their libraries (shown in the bottom half of Table 66) are also generally consistent with findings from the users' survey which were reported in Table 15. Transportation problems and distance from the library are the two primary reasons mentioned by librarians. In the users' survey, two-thirds of the sample said they did not visit the library because it was too far away, and 10 percent cited transportation problems as the reason for not visiting.

The librarians surveyed seem to underestimate somewhat the degree to which the patrons' physical condition prevents them from coming to the library. While about 9 percent of librarians mention this reason, about 16 percent of users in the general sample did so. On the other hand, the degree to which the physical structure of the libraries impedes visits appears to be slightly overestimated by network librarians. About one out of eight librarians feel patrons do not come to the library in person because it is not barrier-free, while only about one in fifty users cited this reason. It also should be noted that several other aspects of the libraries mentioned by librarians--lack of reading room, limited space, parking and location--were not reported by patrons as preventing their visiting the library in person.

INTRODUCING PATRONS TO NLS

Librarians were asked how they thought their patrons first learned about the library service. As Table 67 shows, librarians feel that friends and relatives are the primary source of initial information about NLS. This is consistent with data from the users' survey, reported in Table 12. Schools, libraries, and organizations for the blind and handicapped are other sources cited by librarians: again, this is consistent with the sources reported by the users themselves. Librarians appear to overestimate somewhat the degree to which radio and TV serve as initial information sources, perhaps because of an understandable desire to assess public service campaigns and similar media efforts as successful. Although less than 2 percent of users named radio or TV as their initial source of information about NLS, it should be noted again that many friends, relatives, teachers, and other persons may indeed have learned of NLS in this way. They, in turn, may pass this information along to potential users, thereby increasing the "indirect" impact of radio and TV campaigns.

Specific methods used to introduce new patrons to the library service are reported in Table 68. As indicated, two activities appear to be carried out by most libraries: sending a welcoming letter (70 percent do so most of the time) and sending catalogs and/or information by mail (88 percent do so most of the time). A substantial number of libraries make phone calls to new patrons (about two-thirds do so sometimes or most of the time). Fewer librarians report that new patrons are visited in person (three-fourths seldom or never make such visits). Personal instructions on machine operation are given to most new patrons by 17 percent of libraries, and they are sometimes given by another one-third of libraries. The remaining librarians state that they seldom (36 percent) or never (14 percent) give personal instructions to new patrons.

TABLE 67

LIBRARIANS' REPORTS OF PATRONS' INITIAL
SOURCE OF INFORMATION ABOUT NLS

Source	Percent of Responding Libraries*
Friend or relative	90
School, library, organization for blind/handicapped	70
Hospital, nursing home/doctor/nurse	57
Public library	45
Radio or TV	23
Newspaper/magazine	6
Teacher/counselor	4
Other library users	2
All other sources	2

Source: Questionnaire Item 1.

* Librarians were asked to indicate their readers' three most frequent sources of initial information about NLS.

TABLE 68

LIBRARY METHODS OF INTRODUCING NEW PATRONS TO NLS

Method and frequency used:	Percent of Responding Libraries
Send welcoming letter	
Most of the time	70
Sometimes	12
Seldom	4
Never	14
Make phone call to welcome	
Most of the time	30
Sometimes	37
Seldom	23
Never	10
Make personal welcoming visit	
Most of the time	10
Sometimes	18
Seldom	34
Never	38
Send information and/or catalogs by mail	
Most of the time	88
Sometimes	10
Seldom	2
Never	-
Give personal instructions on machine use	
Most of the time	17
Sometimes	33
Seldom	36
Never	14

Source: Questionnaire Item 2.

In answer to a questionnaire item dealing specifically with adding patrons' names to subscription lists, 83 percent of librarians say they automatically send new patrons' names to be added to the TBT or BBR subscription lists. The other 17 percent report that they send new patrons' names in only after asking them which publications they wish to receive.

ORDERING MATERIALS

A series of questionnaire items dealt with the ordering of reading materials. Table 69 shows librarians' estimates of the number of patrons using various methods to order materials. Users' reports of methods used to order materials appear in Table 24. The Talking Book Topics order form appears to be the most frequently used method. Nine out of ten librarians report that many or most of their patrons use the TBT form to order materials. It also appears that many readers place orders by writing or calling the library. The finding that few patrons order materials in person is consistent with the users' survey finding that few readers visit their libraries in person.

About one-third of librarians surveyed reveal that most or many patrons have friends, relatives, or other persons make their selections for them. The last finding reported in Table 69 is inconsistent with the users' survey findings. Eighty-five percent of the librarians report that many or most of their patrons request that the library select reading materials for them. Yet in the users' survey (Table 25), nearly half of the respondents indicated they seldom or never like this to be done.

TABLE 69

METHODS USED BY PATRONS TO ORDER MATERIALS
(Librarians' Estimates)

Method and number of patrons using:	Percent of Responding Libraries
Order form in TBT	
Most patrons	33
Many patrons	57
Few patrons	10
No patrons	-
Order form in BBR	
Most patrons	7
Many patrons	11
Few patrons	48
No patrons	34
Telephone call to library	
Most patrons	8
Many patrons	59
Few patrons	33
No patrons	-
Letter or card to library	
Most patrons	6
Many patrons	52
Few patrons	41
No patrons	1
Personal visit to library	
Most patrons	1
Many patrons	9
Few patrons	88
No patrons	1
Someone else (friend, relative, etc.) makes selection	
Most patrons	1
Many patrons	30
Few patrons	68
No patrons	-
Patrons request that library make selection	
Most patrons	27
Many patrons	58
Few patrons	14
No patrons	1

Source: Questionnaire Item 4.

The issue of libraries making selections for patrons was explored further in a separate questionnaire item, shown in Table 70. Only 2 percent of librarians never make selections for their readers. Another one-third indicate they select materials only when requested to do so. The remaining two-thirds of librarians surveyed select materials as substitutes for unavailable materials (20 percent) or simply make selections based upon readers' interests (43 percent). By way of comparison, the data reported in Table 25 should be noted. About one-third of users surveyed said they never like to have materials selected for them by librarians. Very young (under age 10) and very old (over age 80) readers were somewhat more likely to favor having the librarians make selections for them.

Network library survey findings regarding the shipment of materials are generally consistent with those of the users' survey, which were reported in Table 25. As Table 71 indicates, about three-fourths of librarians report that readers' orders are filled in one day or less. Less than 4 percent require four or more days to fill orders. Consistent with this, only 14 percent of users in the general sample said their orders are seldom or never filled quickly. Likewise, only about 3 percent of readers who commented on the library service suggested that service should be speeded up.

Ordering materials by mail was the subject of questionnaire items for which responses are shown in Table 72. According to librarians, patrons' most frequent complaints relate to late arrival or non-arrival of materials and receipt of damaged materials. While this finding appears to contradict those in the above paragraph, late arrival could be relatively the most frequent complaint. Nevertheless, it occurs infrequently in absolute numbers. Most complaints are

TABLE 70

LIBRARIES' SELECTION OF MATERIALS FOR PATRONS

Extent to which library makes selection of reading materials for patrons	Percent of Responding Libraries
Never select for patrons	2
Select only when patrons request library to do so	34
Select only when specific material requested is unavailable	20
Select based upon patrons' interests, even if not requested to do so	43

Source: Questionnaire Item 5.

TABLE 71

LIBRARY ESTIMATES OF
LENGTH OF TIME REQUIRED TO FILL PATRONS'
REQUESTS FOR MATERIALS

Length of time required	Percent of Responding Libraries
Less than four hours	15
4 hours - one day	9
One day	53
Two days	15
Three days	5
Four days or longer	4

Source: Questionnaire Item 6.

TABLE 72

LIBRARIANS' REPORTS OF PATRONS' PROBLEMS
WITH ORDERING AND RECEIVING MATERIALS BY MAIL

Problems most often reported by patrons	Percent of Responding Libraries*
Materials arrived late	60
Ordered materials were not received	51
Materials were damaged in mail	21
No problems reported	15
Materials not delivered by post office	14
Mailman will not pick up materials	2
Materials were lost in mail	1
All other problems	4

How patrons report these problems	Percent of Responding Libraries*
Telephone the library	100
Write to the library	70
Report problems when visting the library	45
Contact other persons/agencies	7
All other methods	1

Source: Questionnaire Items 7a and b.

* Multiple responses were accepted on these items.

received by telephone, as shown in the bottom half of Table 72. Letters to the library also are used to communicate problems related to mail orders. Patrons who do visit their libraries in person apparently mention mail order problems.

SUBJECT AREAS AND SUPPLY OF MATERIALS

The most specific insights into patrons' reading interests are, of course, to be obtained from the patrons themselves. Thus, the previous sections have discussed at length the reported attitudes of NLS users toward book topics. In the network library survey, librarians were asked two specific questions dealing with book topics: in what areas are more materials needed and in what areas are too many materials now being produced. Responses are shown in Tables 73 and 74.

The findings reported in Table 73 represent librarians' opinions about readers' interests, based upon their experiences in dealing with their patrons. When interpreting these data, findings from the users' survey should be considered as well. Of particular relevance is Table 27 which presents users' ratings of the importance of various topics. Percentages from the users' survey are included in Tables 73 and 74 for comparison.

The largest number of librarians name westerns as books which require a greater supply. Religion, humor, romance, and detective/mystery also are topics named by more than half of the librarians surveyed. Topics mentioned by the smallest numbers of librarians are foreign language books, light fiction/short stories, painting and sculpture, and handicapped (all mentioned by less than 10 percent of librarians).

TABLE 73

TOPICS ABOUT WHICH LIBRARIANS FEEL
MORE MATERIALS ARE NEEDED

Topic	Percent of Responding Libraries	Percent of Users*
Westerns	73	27
Religion	68	35
Humor	57	44
Romance	55	32
Detective and mystery	52	38
Sports	42	16
Animal and wildlife	42	26
Bestsellers	40	47
Historical fiction	38	45
Travel	37	35
Adventure	36	35
Biography	35	41
Classics	33	29
Hobbies and crafts	33	17
Music	28	28
Self-help	27	31
History	26	38
Health	23	29
Consumer affairs	22	23
Politics	22	20
Literature	16	37
Science	16	26
Movies and theater	14	17
Psychology	13	18
Science fiction	12	18
Handicapped	7	24
Painting and sculpture	7	6
Light fiction/short stories	6**	-
Foreign language books	1**	-
All other	4**	-

Source: Questionnaire Item 8a.

* Percent of TBT sample who rated the topic "very important" to them.

** Written in by respondents; no directly comparable user data.

Librarians were also asked to list topics about which they believe fewer materials are needed. As Table 74 shows, books with strong language or explicit sex are mentioned by nearly one-fourth of the librarians. In addition, science fiction and handicapped or self-help are topics mentioned by more than 10 percent of librarians who answered this questions as requiring fewer materials.

In questionnaire item 9a, librarians were asked about their copy allotments. Sixteen librarians indicate that there are often discrepancies. These are fairly evenly divided between those who say they receive more than requested and those who say they receive less than requested.

Questionnaire items 9c and 9d concerned receipt of materials from NLS which are not needed. Twenty-three librarians (or 16%) indicate they have received such materials during the past year. A variety of items are mentioned by these 23 librarians, with only five being mentioned by more than one librarian. These five items are:

- Foreign language books
- Music catalogs or brochures
- Too many bibliographies
- Braille materials
- Extra copies of News and Update

TABLE 74

TOPICS ABOUT WHICH LIBRARIANS FEEL
FEWER MATERIALS ARE NEEDED

Topic	Percent of Responding Libraries	Percent of Users*
Books with strong language/explicit sex	23**	-
Science fiction	18	54
Handicapped/self-help	14	39
Biography	10	16
Literature	10	25
Religion/theology	8	32
History	5	20
Violence	5	-
Sports	4	58
Crafts/hobbies	3	53
Foreign language books	1**	-
All other	23**	-

* Percent of TBT sample who rated the topic "not at all important" to them.

** Written in by respondents; no directly comparable user data.

DEFECTS IN MATERIALS

Methods used by librarians to inspect reading materials are shown in Table 75. As indicated there, about one-fourth of librarians surveyed do not usually inspect reading materials for defects. Those librarians who do conduct such inspections were asked several questions about this. Less than one out of eight librarians say they usually inspect materials before they are circulated, and 4 percent inspect materials on a rotational basis. The large majority (86 percent) of librarians who regularly inspect materials say they do so as the materials are returned from circulation.

As Table 75 indicates, cassettes receive more thorough examination than do discs. Eighty-three percent of libraries that conduct inspections report that all cassette containers are opened and visually inspected; for discs, this figure is only 53 percent. Cassettes are rewound as needed by 78 percent of libraries that conduct inspections. Nearly 10 percent of librarians at libraries which inspect materials indicate that all discs are regularly cleaned. Another 8 percent indicate that only cassettes are inspected. For discs, the second most frequent method used to locate defects is visual inspection of a sample of containers.

As Table 76 shows, librarians feel that patrons do identify defective materials before returning them; nearly half report that their patrons almost always do this. The most common metnod of identifying defective materials is to tie a string to the outside of the container; 92 percent of librarians say their patrons frequently use this method. Other patrons tie a string to the disc or cassette before placing it in the container, although about half of the librarians report that their users seldom or never do this.

TABLE 75

LIBRARIANS' INSPECTION OF MATERIALS FOR DEFECTS

Are materials usually inspected for defects?	Percent of Responding Libraries
Yes	76
No	24
When are materials inspected?*	
As they are returned from circulation	86
Before circulation	13
On a rotational basis	4
All other times	4
How are discs inspected?*	
All containers opened and visually inspected	53
Sample of containers opened and visually inspected	20
Discs marked by patrons are inspected	16
All discs are cleaned	10
Only cassettes are inspected	8
All other methods	7
How are cassettes inspected?*	
All containers opened and visually inspected	83
All cassettes requiring rewinding are rewound	78
Sample of containers opened and visually inspected	8
Cassettes marked by patrons are inspected	7
All other methods	4

Source: Questionnaire Items 12a, b, c and d.

* Multiple responses were accepted on these items.

TABLE 76

PATRONS' IDENTIFICATION OF DEFECTIVE MATERIALS
(Librarians' Estimates)

How often do patrons identify defective materials before returning them?	Percent of Responding Libraries
Almost always	46
Sometimes	54
Seldom	-

Methods and frequency used by patrons to identify defective materials*	Percent of Responding Libraries
a. Tying a string to outside of mailing container	
Frequently	92
Occasionally	7
Seldom/never	1
b. Tying a string to disc/cassette before placing in container	
Frequently	7
Occasionally	44
Seldom/never	49
c. Enclosing a note inside mailing container	
Frequently	16
Occasionally	62
Seldom/never	22
d. Marking/writing on outside of mailing container	
Frequently	2
Occasionally	27
Seldom/never	71

Other methods used to identify defective materials	Percent of Responding Libraries
Patrons call library	31
Patrons write to library	9
Place damaged item upside down in container	4
Use rubber bands/other fasteners	1
All other methods	3

Source: Questionnaire Item 11.

* Methods a-d were choices presented in the questionnaire; "other methods" were written in by respondents.

Other methods used by numerous patrons include enclosing a note inside the container and marking the outside of the container. As indicated in additional responses written in by librarians, a small number of users apparently call or write the library, place damaged items upside down in their containers, or mark them with rubber bands or other fasteners.

Librarians' estimates of the incidence of various types of defects are shown in Table 77. It should be noted that the figures refer to the percentage of defects which fall into a given category--not to the percentage of materials which are found to be defective. As these figures indicate, missing/wrong labels, broken records/tapes, and scratched/warped records account for relatively small percentages of defects discovered. Unwound tapes and missing records/cassettes are the most frequent defects.

These findings are supported by those presented in Table 78. As shown there, missing records/cassettes and unwound tapes are mentioned by nearly all librarians as the most frequent defects found when inspecting materials.

PROBLEMS REPORTED BY PATRONS

At the end of the questionnaire, librarians were asked to write in any continuing problems which are reported to them by patrons. Their responses, by specific program areas, are shown in Tables 79 through 83.

Reading equipment. About one-third of the librarians say their patrons report no significant problems with reading equipment. Among those who do report such problems, the most common has to do with operation of cassette players. This is consistent with the findings from the users' survey, which indicated that patrons have more difficulties in using cassette players than disc players.

TABLE 77

INCIDENCE OF VARIOUS DEFECTS
(Librarians' Estimates)

What percentage of defective materials fall into these categories?	Percent of Responding Libraries
a. Missing or wrong labels	
Less than 10%	94
10-19%	4
20% or more	3
b. Missing records or cassettes	
Less than 10%	44
10-19%	16
20-29%	10
30-39%	5
40-49%	4
50% or more	21
c. Tape spill	
Less than 10%	55
10-19%	26
20-29%	10
30% or more	10
d. Broken records/tapes	
Less than 10%	93
10-19%	4
20% or more	4
e. Scratched/warped records	
Less than 10%	52
10-19%	26
20-29%	13
30% or more	10
f. Tapes not rewound	
Less than 10%	16
10-19%	14
20-29%	15
30-39%	11
40-49%	8
50% or more	36
g. Broken containers	
Less than 10%	33
10-29%	17
30-39%	33
40-49%	17

Source: Questionnaire Item 12f.

TABLE 78

MOST FREQUENT PROBLEMS FOUND
DURING LIBRARIES' INSPECTION OF MATERIALS

Problem	Percent of Responding Libraries*
Missing records or cassettes	96
Tapes that are not rewound	94
Tape spill	69
Scratched/warped records	58
Broken records/tapes	17
Missing labels	11
Wrong material in container	11
Tapes/records out of sequence	3
Broken container	1
All other problems	11

Source: Questionnaire Item 12e.

* Multiple responses were accepted on this item.

TABLE 79

LIBRARIANS' ESTIMATES OF PROBLEMS
REPORTED BY PATRONS:
READING EQUIPMENT

Problem	Percent of Responding Libraries*
No significant problems	34
Patron problems using 4-track cassettes	19
Cassette players need frequent repairs	17
Cassettes too hard to use/too complicated	13
Volume control/sound distortion	10
Automatic shut-off too soon	10
Lack of headphones	8
Changing needles/needle wearout	7
C-76 cassettes of poor quality	6
Defective rewind mechanisms	6
Batteries wear out too soon	4
Shortage of machines	2
All other	6

Source: Questionnaire Item 18a.

TABLE 80

LIBRARIANS' ESTIMATES OF
PROBLEMS REPORTED BY PATRONS:
TECHNICAL AND OTHER PROBLEMS WITH
DISCS, CASSETTES AND BRAILLE

Problem	Percent of Responding Libraries*
No significant problems	40
Broken-tangled tape/tape spills	17
Difficult learning to use 4-track cassettes	17
Broken/difficult to open containers	9
Damaged discs/cassettes	7
Bent/poor quality flexible discs	6
Scratched records/discs	2
Mis-labeling	2
Poor quality tapes	2
Poor positioned/hard to read labels	2
Tapes not rewound	2
All other	12

Source: Questionnaire Item 18c.

* Multiple responses were accepted on these items.

Technical and other problems with discs, cassettes and braille. Problems mentioned in this program area are similar to those reported with equipment, in that cassettes appear to cause more difficulties. About 17 percent of librarians surveyed say some readers express difficulty in learning to use the 4-track cassette players. Other problems associated with cassettes are broken and tangled tapes, tape spill, poor quality, and tapes which have not been rewound. Some problems are also reported with disc players, such as damaged and scratched records. Six percent of librarians surveyed say that flexible discs are sometimes bent and/or of poor quality.

Book selection. Less than half of the librarians surveyed report any continuing patron problems with regard to book selection. Among those who do report such problems, the most frequently mentioned are complaints about books with sex and strong language (16%). Apart from complaints about narrators (reported by 3 percent of librarians), shortage of copies or titles (3 percent), and complaints about the selection of braille materials (2 percent), all other problems reported are requests for more materials in specific subject areas. As pointed out earlier in this section, findings in this area should be interpreted in the context of the findings from the users' survey.

Network library services. Consistent with the high level of satisfaction found in the users' survey (Table 32), eight out of ten librarians surveyed say their patrons report no significant problems directly associated with the service they receive from their regional and subregional libraries. Of the small number of librarians who do report patron problems, most have to do with ordering and receiving materials.

TABLE 81

LIBRARIANS' ESTIMATES OF PROBLEMS
REPORTED BY PATRONS:
BOOK SELECTION

Problem	Percent of Responding Libraries*
No significant problems	52
Books with too much sex/strong language	16
Need more religious books/bibles	8
Need more short stories/westerns/humor	8
Need more light fiction	6
Need more nice/happy/family stories	4
Need more bestsellers/current material	3
Not enough copies/titles not available	3
Complaints about narrators	3
Need more foreign language titles	2
Larger subject area/more titles	2
Braille title selection poor	2
Need more children/adult books	1
All other	10

Source: Questionnaire Item 18b.

* Multiple responses were accepted on this item.

Seven percent report that their patrons say materials take too long to arrive. For 3 percent, the problem is that materials are difficult to obtain or not available. About 5 percent report problems associated with subscription materials, and 2 percent say that their patrons experience difficulties associated with transferring from one library to another.

All other problems. Comments written by librarians in the general section dealing with "any other significant problems" mirror those already mentioned in other program areas: problems with ordering and receiving materials, especially by mail; comments about subject areas and book titles; complaints about narrators. About six out of ten librarians indicate no significant problems in response to this question.

TABLE 82

LIBRARIANS' ESTIMATES OF PROBLEMS
REPORTED BY PATRONS:
NETWORK LIBRARY SERVICES

Problem	Percent of Responding Libraries*
No significant problems	81
Takes too long to get material	7
Service problems with subscription material	5
Materials hard to get/not available	3
Difficulties in transferring libraries	2
Not enough books	2
All other	7

Soruce: Questionnaire Item 18d.

TABLE 83

LIBRARIANS' ESTIMATES OF
PROBLEMS REPORTED BY PATRONS:
ANY OTHER SIGNIFICANT PROBLEMS

Problem	Percent of Responding Libraries*
No significant problems	59
Poor postal service	8
Patrons don't like some narrators' voices	6
Need more varied titles	6
Service problems with subscription material	5
Need more magazines	3
Need more machines	2
Patrons receive damaged/dirty material	2
Delay in receiving Talking Book Topics	2
Prefer discs to cassettes	1
Need more headphones	1
All other	11

Source: Questionnaire Item 18e.

* Multiple responses were accepted on these items.

APPENDIX A

NATIONAL LIBRARY SERVICE FOR THE BLIND AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20542

1291 Taylor Street, N.W.
Area Code 202-882-5500
TWX 710-822-1969

☐☐ (5)
(6-15 open)

DEAR READER:

YOU HAVE BEEN SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN A NATIONWIDE SURVEY OF OUR READERS. MARKET FACTS, INC., A PRIVATE CONSULTING FIRM, WILL BE CONDUCTING THE SURVEY UNDER CONTRACT TO THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS. INFORMATION WILL BE COLLECTED ON READERS' USE OF RECORDED AND BRAILLE MATERIALS, THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH LIBRARY STAFFS, AND INDIVIDUAL READING INTERESTS. WE WILL USE THIS INFORMATION TO DEVELOP PLANS FOR IMPROVING LIBRARY SERVICE IN THE COMING YEARS.

YOU ARE ONE OF A SMALL NUMBER OF READERS WHO ARE BEING ASKED ABOUT THESE ISSUES. YOUR NAME WAS CHOSEN IN A RANDOM SAMPLE DRAWN FROM SEVERAL HUNDRED THOUSAND READERS THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE UNITED STATES. IN ORDER THAT THE RESULTS WILL TRULY REPRESENT THE OPINIONS AND INTERESTS OF READERS IN ALL PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT EACH QUESTIONNAIRE BE COMPLETED AND RETURNED.

EACH READER'S ANSWERS WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. THEY WILL BE COMBINED WITH THE ANSWERS GIVEN BY ALL OTHER PARTICIPANTS IN THE STUDY.

I'D LIKE TO STRESS MY INTEREST IN OBTAINING BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE COMMENTS. WHILE IT IS ENCOURAGING FOR US TO BE COMPLIMENTED ON THE SERVICE, WE DO NEED TO LEARN ABOUT AREAS IN WHICH THERE IS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT.

I URGE YOU TO SET ASIDE A FEW MINUTES, AT YOUR EARLIEST CONVENIENCE, TO FILL OUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE. THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR HELP.

FRANK KURT CYLKE
DIRECTOR

NATIONAL LIBRARY SERVICE
FOR THE
BLIND AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
SURVEY OF READERS

PLEASE READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY
BEFORE COMPLETING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

WE ARE MAILING THE ENCLOSED QUESTIONNAIRE TO A SELECTED NUMBER OF READERS. THE READER'S NAMES HAVE BEEN TAKEN FROM SEVERAL OF OUR MAILING LISTS. BECAUSE THERE MAY BE DUPLICATION OF NAMES, IT IS POSSIBLE THAT A FEW READERS MAY RECEIVE MORE THAN ONE QUESTIONNAIRE. PLEASE COMPLETE ONLY ONE QUESTIONNAIRE. IF YOU DO RECEIVE AN ADDITIONAL QUESTIONNAIRE, PLEASE DISCARD IT.

ALL INFORMATION WHICH YOU PROVIDE WILL BE KEPT STRICLY CONFIDENTIAL. YOUR ANSWERS WILL BE COMBINED WITH THOSE OF MANY OTHER READERS. MARKET FACTS, INC., A PRIVATE CONSULTING FIRM, WILL BE CONDUCTING THE SURVEY UNDER CONTRACT TO THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

MOST QUESTIONS ASK ABOUT "THE LIBRARY." PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THIS MEANS A REGIONAL OR SUBREGIONAL LIBRARY -- SOMETIMES CALLED A TALKING BOOK OR BRAILLE LENDING LIBRARY. ALTHOUGH YOU MAY USE OTHER LIBRARIES OR RECEIVE RECORDED OR BRAILLED MATERIALS FROM ADDITIONAL SOURCES, THE SURVEY IS CONCERNED ONLY WITH THE SERVICE AND MATERIALS OBTAINED FROM THE NATIONAL LIBRARY SERVICE FOR THE BLIND AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED THROUGH ITS NATIONWIDE NETWORK OF COOPERATING LIBRARIES.

YOUR ANSWERS TO EACH QUESTION SHOULD BE INDICATED BY MARKING AN "X" IN THE BOX NEXT TO THE ANSWER YOU CHOOSE. UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED, ONLY ONE BOX SHOULD BE MARKED FOR EACH QUESTION.

IN PREVIOUS SURVEYS, WE'VE LEARNED THAT MANY READERS WISH TO COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF FRIENDS OR FAMILY MEMBERS (IF YOU CHOOSE TO DO THIS, PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT THEY RECORD YOUR OWN PERSONAL OPINIONS FOR ALL THE QUESTIONS). OTHER READERS MAY PREFER TO COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE WITHOUT ASSISTANCE.

YOUR CO-OPERATION IN THIS SURVEY IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.
PLEASE RETURN YOUR COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE BY
OCTOBER 12, 1979
USING THE ENCLOSED POSTAGE-PAID ENVELOPE.

PLEASE READ THE ATTACHED INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY
BEFORE COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

1. DURING THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS HAVE YOU USED ANY BOOKS OR MAGAZINES FROM THE LIBRARY?

YES.... ☐ 1 →(GO TO QUESTION 3, PAGE 4)

NO..... ☐ 2 →(GO TO QUESTION 2)

(16)

2. WE ARE INTERESTED IN FINDING OUT WHY SOME READERS HAVE STOPPED REQUESTING OR RECEIVING BOOKS AND MAGAZINES. IF THERE ARE ANY PROBLEMS WE CAN CORRECT, WE WOULD LIKE TO DO SO. PLEASE USE THE SPACE BELOW TO INDICATE ANY REASONS WHY YOU HAVEN'T USED LIBRARY MATERIALS IN THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

17 ☐ 18

(19-20 open)

IF YOU HAVE NOT REQUESTED OR RECEIVED BOOKS OR MAGAZINES FROM THE REGIONAL LIBRARY DURING THE PAST TWELVE MONTHS, PLEASE RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRE IN THE POSTAGE PAID ENVELOPE WHICH HAS BEEN INCLUDED FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE. THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO DO THIS.

THE ANSWERS WHICH READERS GIVE TO QUESTIONS ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE WILL HELP US IN PLANNING THE PROGRAM FOR THE NEXT FEW YEARS. FIRST, WE'D LIKE TO KNOW HOW LONG OUR READERS HAVE BEEN USING THE PROGRAM AND HOW THEY BECAME INVOLVED IN IT. THE NEXT FEW QUESTIONS WILL HELP TO PROVIDE THIS INFORMATION.

3. FIRST, ABOUT HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN USING THE LIBRARY? (PLEASE "X" THE ONE BOX THAT BEST DESCRIBES HOW LONG YOU HAVE BEEN USING THE LIBRARY.)

- LESS THAN 1 YEAR... ☐ 1
- 1 - 3 YEARS..... ☐ 2
- 4 - 6 YEARS..... ☐ 3
- 7 - 9 YEARS..... ☐ 4
- 10 YEARS OR MORE... ☐ 5

(21)

4. IN WHAT CITY AND STATE IS THE REGIONAL OR SUBREGIONAL LIBRARY WHICH YOU NOW USE?

_____ CITY _____ STATE

22 ☐ ☐ 23

5. PLEASE "X" THE ONE BOX THAT BEST DESCRIBES HOW YOU FIRST HEARD ABOUT THE FREE LIBRARY SERVICE FOR THE BLIND AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED.

(24-25 open)

- FRIEND OR RELATIVE..... ☐ 1
- SCHOOL, LIBRARY OR OTHER ORGANIZATION FOR THE BLIND OR HANDICAPPED..... ☐ 2
- HOSPITAL, NURSING HOME, DOCTOR OR NURSE..... ☐ 3
- RADIO OR TV..... ☐ 4
- NEWSPAPER OR MAGAZINE..... ☐ 5
- PUBLIC LIBRARY..... ☐ 6
- OTHER (WRITE IN) _____

(26)

6. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING PUBLICATIONS HAVE YOU RECEIVED BY MAIL DURING THE PAST FOUR MONTHS? (PLEASE "X" ONE BOX FOR EACH PUBLICATION YOU HAVE RECEIVED DURING THE PAST FOUR MONTHS.)

- TALKING BOOK TOPICS (RECORDED)..... ☐ 1
- TALKING BOOK TOPICS (LARGE PRINT)..... ☐ 2
- BRAILLE BOOK REVIEW (BRAILLE)..... ☐ 3
- BRAILLE BOOK REVIEW (LARGE PRINT)..... ☐ 4
- I HAVE NOT RECEIVED ANY OF THESE PUBLICATIONS IN THE LAST 4 MONTHS... ☐

(27)

THIS SECTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE IS ABOUT DIFFERENT TYPES OF READING EQUIPMENT WHICH YOU MAY USE. PLEASE ANSWER ONLY THOSE QUESTIONS WHICH ARE ABOUT THE TYPES OF EQUIPMENT YOU HAVE. REMEMBER, THIS REFERS ONLY TO EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS FROM YOUR REGIONAL (OR SUBREGIONAL) LIBRARY.

7. DO YOU HAVE ANY READING EQUIPMENT (TALKING BOOK RECORD PLAYERS OR CASSETTE PLAYERS) FROM YOUR REGIONAL (OR SUBREGIONAL) LIBRARY OR MACHINE LENDING AGENCY?

YES..... ☐ 1 → (GO TO QUESTION 8) (28)

NO..... ☐ 2 → (GO TO QUESTION 15, PAGE 8)

TALKING BOOK RECORD PLAYERS

8. DO YOU NOW USE A TALKING BOOK RECORD PLAYER WHICH WAS OBTAINED FROM YOUR REGIONAL OR SUBREGIONAL LIBRARY OR MACHINE LENDING AGENCY?

YES..... ☐ 1 → (GO TO QUESTION 9) (29)

NO..... ☐ 2 → (GO TO QUESTION 10, PAGE 6)

9. BELOW IS A LIST OF THINGS READERS MIGHT FIND DIFFICULT IN USING TALKING TALKING BOOK RECORD PLAYERS. PLEASE READ EACH PROBLEM, THEN PLACE AN "X" IN THE BOX WHICH BEST DESCRIBES HOW OFTEN IT IS A PROBLEM FOR YOU PERSONALLY. FOR EXAMPLE, THE FIRST PROBLEM IS "FINDING THE BEGINNING OF THE RECORD". PLEASE "X" ONE BOX TO SHOW IF THIS IS A PROBLEM FOR YOU "VERY OFTEN", "SOMETIMES", "SELDOM" OR "NEVER". NOW PLEASE "X" ONE BOX TO SHOW YOUR OPINION FOR EACH OF THE REMAINING PROBLEMS.

	How Often is This a Problem?				
Talking Book Record Player Problems	Very Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	
Finding the beginning of the record.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	(30)
Receiving books with missing or badly damaged records.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	(31)
Reading the record labels....	☐	☐	☐	☐	(32)
Placing flexible discs on the record player.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	(33)

(PLEASE BE SURE THAT FOR EACH PROBLEM YOU HAVE PLACED AN "X" IN ONE BOX TO SHOW YOUR OPINION.)

TALKING BOOK CASSETTE PLAYERS

10. DO YOU NOW USE A CASSETTE PLAYER WHICH WAS OBTAINED FROM A REGIONAL OR SUBREGIONAL LIBRARY OR MACHINE LENDING AGENCY?

YES..... ☐ 1 →(GO TO QUESTION 11)
NO..... ☐ 2 →(GO TO QUESTION 12, PAGE 7) (34)

(35-36 open)

11. BELOW IS A LIST OF THINGS READERS MIGHT FIND DIFFICULT IN USING CASSETTE PLAYERS. PLEASE READ EACH PROBLEM, THEN PLACE AN "X" IN THE BOX WHICH BEST DESCRIBES HOW OFTEN IT IS A PROBLEM FOR YOU PERSONALLY. FOR EXAMPLE, THE FIRST PROBLEM IS "FIGURING OUT WHICH CONTROLS TO USE". PLEASE "X" ONE BOX TO SHOW IF THIS IS A PROBLEM FOR YOU "VERY OFTEN", "SOMETIMES", "SELDOM" OR "NEVER". NOW, PLEASE "X" ONE BOX TO SHOW YOUR OPINION FOR EACH OF THE REMAINING PROBLEMS.

	How Often is This a Problem?				
Cassette Player Problems	Very Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	
Figuring out which controls to use.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	(37)
Hearing another side of the tape in the background when playing one side.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	(38)
Receiving cassettes that don't play.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	(39)
Receiving cassettes which must be rewound before they can be played.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	(40)
Reading the cassette label.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	(41)

(PLEASE BE SURE THAT FOR EACH PROBLEM YOU HAVE PLACED AN "X" IN ONE BOX TO SHOW YOUR OPINION.)

(42-47 open)

12. THE LIST BELOW DESCRIBES SOME FEATURES WHICH PEOPLE WANT THEIR READING EQUIPMENT -- TAPE RECORDERS, CASSETTE PLAYERS, OR RECORD PLAYERS -- TO HAVE. FOR EACH FEATURE, PLEASE "X" THE ONE BOX WHICH BEST DESCRIBES HOW IMPORTANT THIS FEATURE IS TO YOU. THESE STATEMENTS APPLY TO ALL TYPES OF READING EQUIPMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, THE FIRST FEATURE IS "A MACHINE THAT CAN BE EASILY MOVED FROM PLACE TO PLACE". PLEASE "X" ONE BOX TO SHOW IF THIS IS "VERY IMPORTANT", "SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT", OR "NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT" TO YOU. NOW, FOR EACH OF THE REMAINING FEATURES, PLEASE "X" ONE BOX TO SHOW HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO YOU.

READING EQUIPMENT FEATURES	HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS FEATURE? VERY IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	
A MACHINE THAT CAN BE EASILY MOVED FROM PLACE TO PLACE.....	☐	☐	☐	(48)
A MACHINE THAT TURNS ITSELF OFF AUTOMATICALLY AT THE END OF A RECORD/TAPE.....	☐	☐	☐	(49)
A MACHINE THAT CAN BE PLAYED AT DIFFERENT SPEEDS, THAT IS, TO SPEED UP OR SLOW DOWN THE NARRATOR'S RATE OF SPEECH.....	☐	☐	☐	(50)
A MACHINE THAT CAN OPERATE IN PLACES WHERE A POWER OUTLET IS NOT AVAILABLE (FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE CAR OR OUTDOORS).....	☐	☐	☐	(51)

(PLEASE BE SURE THAT FOR EACH FEATURE YOU HAVE PUT AN "X" IN ONE BOX TO SHOW YOUR OPINION.)

THE NEXT SECTION IS ABOUT THE NARRATORS WHO RECORD TALKING BOOKS. REMEMBER, ALL QUESTIONS ON THIS QUESTIONNAIRE REFER ONLY TO THE MATERIALS AND SERVICES OF YOUR REGIONAL (OR SUBREGIONAL) LIBRARY.

13. IN GENERAL, HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT MALE AND FEMALE NARRATORS?

I ALWAYS PREFER MALE NARRATORS..... ☐ 1
I ALWAYS PREFER FEMALE NARRATORS..... ☐ 2 (52)
MY PREFERENCE DEPENDS ON THE SUBJECT..... ☐ 3

14. DO YOU LIKE OR DISLIKE IT WHEN NARRATORS USE DIFFERENT VOICES FOR DIFFERENT CHARACTERS?

I LIKE IT..... ☐ 1
I DISLIKE IT..... ☐ 2 (53)
IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE TO ME..... ☐ 3

15A. DO YOU LIKE IT OR DISLIKE IT WHEN NARRATORS USE FOREIGN OR REGIONAL ACCENTS FOR DIFFERENT CHARACTERS?

I LIKE IT..... ☐ 1
I DISLIKE IT..... ☐ 2 (54)
IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE TO ME..... ☐ 3

15B. SOME NARRATORS THEMSELVES HAVE ACCENTS. DO YOU LIKE OR DISLIKE LISTENING TO THESE NARRATORS?

I LIKE IT..... ☐ 1
I DISLIKE IT..... ☐ 2 (55)
IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE TO ME..... ☐ 3

(56-58 open)

THE NEXT SECTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE IS ABOUT THE TYPES OF READING MATERIALS WHICH YOU OBTAIN FROM THE REGIONAL OR SUBREGIONAL LIBRARY.

16. FIRST, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS BEST DESCRIBES YOUR USE OF BRAILLE? (PLEASE "X" ONLY ONE BOX.)

I'M NOT ABLE TO READ BRAILLE AT ALL..... ☐ 1
I'M ABLE TO READ SOME BRAILLE, SUCH AS CASSETTE OR RECORD LABELS..... ☐ 2 (59)
I'M ABLE TO READ BOOKS AND MAGAZINES IN BRAILLE..... ☐ 3

17. WE'RE INTERESTED IN KNOWING HOW OFTEN READERS USE DIFFERENT TYPES OF READING MATERIALS. FOR EACH TYPE LISTED BELOW, PLEASE "X" ONE BOX TO SHOW WHETHER YOU USE THAT TYPE OF MATERIAL "VERY OFTEN", "SOMETIMES", "SELDOM" OR "NEVER". PLEASE GIVE YOUR OPINION FOR EACH TYPE OF READING MATERIAL LISTED BELOW, EVEN IF YOU DON'T USE THAT TYPE.

	How Often Do You Use This Type?				
Type of Reading Material	Very Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	
Talking books on records.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	(60)
Talking books on cassettes....	☐	☐	☐	☐	(61)
Braille books.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	(62)
Magazines on records.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	(63)
Magazines on cassettes.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	(64)
Braille Magazines.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	(65)

(PLEASE BE SURE THAT FOR EACH TYPE OF READING MATERIAL YOU HAVE PLACED AN "X" IN ONE BOX TO SHOW YOUR OPINION.)

18A. BELOW ARE SOME STATEMENTS READERS MIGHT MAKE ABOUT ORDERING READING MATERIALS. PLEASE READ EACH STATEMENT, AND THEN "X" THE ONE BOX WHICH BEST INDICATES HOW OFTEN EACH IS TRUE FOR YOU PERSONALLY. FOR EXAMPLE, THE FIRST STATEMENT IS "I LIKE TO HAVE SOMEONE AT THE LIBRARY SELECT BOOKS FOR ME". PLEASE "X" ONE BOX TO SHOW WHETHER THE STATEMENT IS "VERY OFTEN", "SOMETIMES", "SELDOM" OR "NEVER" TRUE FOR YOU. PLEASE BE SURE TO "X" ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT.

	How Often Is This True For You?				
Reading Material Statements	Very Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	
I like to have someone at the library select books for me.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	(66)
My orders for books or other materials are filled quickly.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	(67)
Reading materials which I order are not available.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	(68)

(PLEASE BE SURE THAT FOR EACH STATEMENT YOU HAVE PLACED AN "X" IN ONE BOX TO SHOW YOUR OPINION.)

(69-70 open)

18B. BELOW ARE SOME WAYS YOU MAY USE TO SELECT READING MATERIALS. PLEASE READ EACH WAY, AND THEN "X" THE ONE BOX WHICH BEST SHOWS WHETHER YOU SELECT MATERIALS THAT WAY "VERY OFTEN", "SOMETIMES", "SELDOM" OR "NEVER". PLEASE BE SURE YOU "X" ONE BOX FOR EACH STATEMENT.

WAYS TO SELECT READING MATERIAL	HOW OFTEN DO YOU SELECT READING MATERIAL THIS WAY? VERY OFTEN	SOMETIMES	SELDOM	NEVER	
I SELECT BOOKS BY READING THE ONE LINE DESCRIPTIONS ON THE PRINT CHECKLIST FORM.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	(71)
I SELECT BOOKS BY LISTENING TO MOST OR ALL OF THE RECORDED TALKING BOOKS TOPICS.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	(72)
I SELECT BOOKS FROM THE LARGE PRINT EDITION OF TALKING BOOKS TOPICS.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	(73)
I SELECT BOOKS FROM THE LARGE PRINT EDITION OF BRAILLE BOOK REVIEW.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	(74)
I SELECT BOOKS FROM THE BRAILLE EDITION OF BRAILLE BOOK REVIEW.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	(75)
I SELECT BOOKS FROM THE BRAILLE CHECKLIST ORDER FORM.	☐	☐	☐	☐	(76)

(PLEASE BE SURE THAT FOR EACH WAY YOU HAVE PLACED AN "X" IN ONE BOX TO SHOW YOUR OPINION.)

(77-79 open)
☐☐ 80

19. DO YOU LIKE ANNOTATIONS -- THAT IS, SHORT DESCRIPTIONS OF WHAT THE BOOK IS ABOUT -- TO BE READ AT THE BEGINNING OF RECORDED BOOKS?

Card 2
Dup 1-5
(6)

YES..... ☐ 1 NO..... ☐ 2

20. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS BEST DESCRIBES YOUR OPINION ABOUT THE USE OF STRONG LANGUAGE, SUCH AS FOUR-LETTER WORDS, IN FICTION BOOKS?

SUCH LANGUAGE SHOULD NEVER BE USED..... ☐ 1

SUCH LANGUAGE SHOULD ONLY BE USED WHEN IT IS IMPORTANT TO THE STORY..... ☐ 2 (7)

IT DOESN'T MATTER TO ME WHETHER STRONG LANGUAGE IS USED..... ☐ 3

21. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS BEST DESCRIBES YOUR OPINION ABOUT EXPLICIT DESCRIPTIONS OF SEX IN FICTION BOOKS?

SUCH DESCRIPTIONS SHOULD NEVER BE INCLUDED..... ☐ 1

SUCH DESCRIPTIONS SHOULD ONLY BE INCLUDED WHEN IT IS IMPORTANT TO THE STORY..... ☐ 2 (8)

IT DOESN'T MATTER TO ME WHETHER SUCH DESCRIPTIONS ARE USED..... ☐ 3

22. NEXT WE'D LIKE TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR READING INTERESTS. BELOW ARE LISTED DIFFERENT BOOK TOPICS. FOR EACH TOPIC, PLEASE "X" THE ONE BOX THAT BEST DESCRIBES HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO HAVE THIS TOPIC AVAILABLE TO YOU. PLEASE GIVE YOUR OPINION FOR EACH TOPIC, EVEN IF YOU DON'T ACTUALLY READ IT AT THE PRESENT TIME. FOR EXAMPLE, HOW IMPORTANT IS "ADVENTURE" TO YOU? PLEASE "X" ONE BOX TO SHOW IF IT IS "VERY IMPORTANT", "SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT" OR "NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT" TO YOU. NOW, PLEASE "X" ONE BOX FOR EACH TOPIC TO SHOW YOUR OPINION.

	How Important Is It To Have This Topic Available?			
Book Topic	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not At All Important	
ADVENTURE.....	☐	☐	☐	(9)
BESTSELLERS.....	☐	☐	☐	(10)
CLASSICS.....	☐	☐	☐	(11)
DETECTIVE AND MYSTERY.....	☐	☐	☐	(12)
HEALTH.....	☐	☐	☐	(13)
HISTORY.....	☐	☐	☐	(14)
HUMOR.....	☐	☐	☐	(15)
MOVIES AND THEATRE.....	☐	☐	☐	(16)
PAINTING AND SCULPTURE.....	☐	☐	☐	(17)
PSYCHOLOGY.....	☐	☐	☐	(18)
RELIGION.....	☐	☐	☐	(19)
SCIENCE FICTION.....	☐	☐	☐	(20)
SPORTS.....	☐	☐	☐	(21)
WESTERNS.....	☐	☐	☐	(22)

(PLEASE BE SURE THAT FOR EACH TOPIC YOU HAVE PLACED AN "X" IN ONE BOX TO SHOW YOUR OPINION.)

(23-40 open)

23. WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE READING MATERIALS AVAILABLE IN A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH?

YES..... ☐ 1 →(GO TO QUESTION 24)

NO..... ☐ 2 →(GO TO QUESTION 25) (41)

24. IN WHAT OTHER LANGUAGE(S) WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE READING MATERIALS?

FRENCH..... ☐ 1

GERMAN..... ☐ 2 (42)

ITALIAN..... ☐ 3

POLISH..... ☐ 4

SPANISH..... ☐ 5

OTHER (WRITE IN) _____

_____

25. BEFORE NOW, HAVE YOU EVER HEARD THAT YOU CAN ORDER MUSIC MATERIALS (FOR EXAMPLE, BOOKS AND SCORES) FROM THE NATIONAL LIBRARY SERVICE MUSIC SECTION IN WASHINGTON, D.C.?

YES..... ☐ 1 NO..... ☐ 2 (43)

THE NEXT SECTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE IS ABOUT THE SERVICES YOU RECEIVE FROM YOUR REGIONAL (OR SUBREGIONAL) LIBRARY.

26. OVERALL, HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE SERVICE FROM YOUR REGIONAL (OR SUB-REGIONAL) LIBRARY?

EXCELLENT..... ☐ 1

GOOD..... ☐ 2 (44)

FAIR..... ☐ 3

POOR..... ☐ 4

27. FIRST, DO YOU RECEIVE A NEWSLETTER FROM THE LIBRARY?

YES..... ☐ 1 →(GO TO QUESTION 28) (45)

NO..... ☐ 2 →(GO TO QUESTION 29A, PAGE 13)

28. IN GENERAL, HOW USEFUL DO YOU FIND THE INFORMATION IN THE NEWSLETTER? (PLEASE "X" ONE BOX.)

VERY USEFUL..... ☐ 1

SOMEWHAT USEFUL..... ☐ 2 (46)

NOT AT ALL USEFUL..... ☐ 3

29A. WE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW HOW READERS FEEL ABOUT VISITING THE LIBRARY IN PERSON, TO SELECT AND RETURN BOOKS. DO YOU EVER VISIT THE LIBRARY IN PERSON?

YES..... ☐ 1

NO..... ☐ 2

(47)

29B. ARE THERE ANY REASONS WHY YOU DON'T VISIT THE LIBRARY, OR WHY YOU DON'T VISIT THE LIBRARY MORE OFTEN? (PLEASE "X" AS MANY BOXES AS APPLY.)

I HAVE NO PROBLEM VISITING THE LIBRARY..... ☐ 1

THE LIBRARY IS TOO FAR FROM WHERE I LIVE..... ☐ 2

THE LIBRARY IS NOT BARRIER FREE..... ☐ 3

THE LIBRARY'S HOURS ARE NOT CONVENIENT FOR ME..... ☐ 4

(48)

OTHER REASONS (WRITE IN): _____

_____

_____

(49-51 open)

30. WE'RE INTERESTED IN KNOWING ABOUT ANY SPECIFIC CHANGES WHICH CAN BE MADE IN THE SERVICE SO THAT IT WILL BEST FILL THE NEEDS OF OUR READERS. IN THE SPACE BELOW, PLEASE WRITE ANY SUGGESTIONS OR COMMENTS WHICH YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE CONCERNING THE LIBRARY SERVICE. YOUR COMMENTS, IDEAS OR SUGGESTIONS MAY BE ON ANY ASPECT OF THE SERVICE: FOR EXAMPLE, READING EQUIPMENT, RECORDED MATERIALS, BRAILLE MATERIALS, SPECIFIC SUBJECT AREAS OR TYPES OF MATERIALS YOU WOULD LIKE, SERVICES PROVIDED BY YOUR REGIONAL (OR SUBREGIONAL) LIBRARY, SERVICES FOR NEW READERS, OR ANYTHING ELSE. YOUR COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS WILL HELP US TO PLAN FOR SERVICES OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS.

I HAVE NO COMMENTS TO MAKE..... ☐

52 ☐ 53

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(54-55 open)

THE LAST SECTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE WILL ASK FOR SOME INFORMATION ABOUT YOURSELF. WE WILL USE THIS INFORMATION FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES -- THAT IS, TO SEE IF WE ARE GETTING A CROSS-SECTION OF OPINIONS FROM ALL TYPES OF READERS. REMEMBER THAT YOUR ANSWERS TO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

31. FIRST, WHAT WAS YOUR AGE ON YOUR LAST BIRTHDAY?

_____ YEARS (56-57)

32. AT WHAT AGE DID YOU BECOME UNABLE TO READ OR HANDLE PRINT MATERIALS?

_____ YEARS (58-59)

33. WHAT KIND OF HANDICAP DO YOU HAVE? (PLEASE "X" AS MANY AS APPLY.)

VISUALLY HANDICAPPED..... ☐ 1
HEARING IMPAIRED..... ☐ 2 (60)
PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED..... ☐ 4
OTHER (PLEASE WRITE IN):

_____

34. WHAT WAS THE HIGHEST GRADE WHICH YOU COMPLETED IN SCHOOL? ("X" ONE BOX.)

LESS THAN EIGHT YEARS..... ☐ 1
GRADE SCHOOL..... ☐ 2
SOME HIGH SCHOOL..... ☐ 3
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE..... ☐ 4 (61)
SOME COLLEGE..... ☐ 5
COLLEGE GRADUATE..... ☐ 6
SOME GRADUATE, PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL..... ☐ 7
COMPLETED GRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL..... ☐ 8
TRADE/TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL SCHOOL (AFTER HIGH SCHOOL)..... ☐ 9

35. WHAT IS YOUR EMPLOYMENT STATUS AT THE PRESENT TIME?

EMPLOYED..... ☐ 1
STUDENT..... ☐ 2
HOMEMAKER..... ☐ 3 (62)
RETIRED..... ☐ 4
UNEMPLOYED..... ☐ 5

36. WHAT IS YOUR ANNUAL FAMILY INCOME?

LESS THAN $5,000..... ☐ 1
$5,000 - $9,999..... ☐ 2
$10,000 - $14,999..... ☐ 3 (63)
$15,000 - $19,999..... ☐ 4
$20,000 - $29,999..... ☐ 5
$30,000 OR MORE..... ☐ 6

FINALLY, WE'D LIKE TO KNOW A FEW THINGS ABOUT YOUR LIVING SITUATION. THIS INFORMATION WILL HELP US IN PLANNING SERVICES FOR OUR READERS. REMEMBER THAT YOUR ANSWERS WILL BE COMBINED WITH THOSE OF MANY OTHER READERS. NO ONE WILL KNOW WHICH SPECIFIC ANSWERS WERE GIVEN BY ANY INDIVIDUAL READERS.

37. DO YOU LIVE... ("X" ONLY ONE.)

ALONE..... ☐ 1
WITH FAMILY OR FRIENDS..... ☐ 2 (64)
AT A RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL, NURSING OR RETIREMENT HOME..... ☐ 3
OTHER (PLEASE WRITE IN):

_____

38. HOW OFTEN DO YOU HAVE SOMEONE AVAILABLE TO HELP YOU READ YOUR MAIL AND TO HELP YOU WITH GENERAL READING, SUCH AS BOOKS AND NEWSPAPERS? FOR EACH TYPE OF READING, PLEASE "X" ONE BOX TO SHOW HOW OFTEN SOMEONE IS AVAILABLE TO HELP YOU.

TYPE OF READING	HOW OFTEN IS SOMEONE AVAILABLE TO HELP YOU? VERY OFTEN	SOMETIMES	SELDOM	NEVER	
PERSONAL MAIL, SUCH AS LETTERS.	☐	☐	☐	☐	(65)
NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	(66)
BOOKS.....	☐	☐	☐	☐	(67)

39. PLEASE INDICATE WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING METHODS YOU USED TO FILL OUT THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. ("X" ONLY ONE BOX.)

SOMEONE READ THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO ME AND MARKED MY ANSWERS..... ☐ 1

I READ AND FILLED OUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE MYSELF..... ☐ 2 (68)

40. JUST TO BE SURE WE ARE REPRESENTING ALL GROUPS IN OUR SURVEY, PLEASE "X" ONE BOX TO INDICATE WHETHER YOU DESCRIBE YOURSELF AS:

BLACK..... ☐ 1

WHITE..... ☐ 2 (69)

HISPANIC..... ☐ 3

OTHER RACIAL OR ETHNIC GROUP (WRITE IN):

_____

41. ARE YOU...

MALE..... ☐ 1 FEMALE..... ☐ 2 (70)

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE SURVEY. YOUR ANSWERS WILL HELP US IN PLANNING SERVICES TO MEET OUR READER'S NEEDS DURING THE COMING YEARS.

PLEASE RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IN THE ENCLOSED POSTAGE-PAID ENVELOPE.

(71-79 open)
☐ 80

NATIONAL LIBRARY SERVICE
FOR THE
BLIND AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED

4 (5)
6 (8)
9 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | (13)

Market Facts' Repr.: _____

Date: _____ Time Interview Began: _____ AM/PM

Hello, I'm _____ from Market Facts, Incorporated, an opinion research company. May I please speak with (RESPONDENT NAME FROM SAMPLE CARD)?

(IF RESPONDENT NOT HOME, SET UP CALLBACK ON SAMPLE CARD.)

A few weeks ago, we mailed you a questionnaire about the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. When you returned the post card, you said that you would prefer to be interviewed by telephone about your regional library's service. Do you have a few minutes to answer some questions?

(IF NOT, SET UP CALLBACK ON SAMPLE CARD.)

Most of the questions will refer to "the Library". Please remember that this means a regional or subregional library -- sometimes called a Talking Book or Braille Lending library. Although you may use other libraries or receive recorded or brailled materials from additional sources, the survey is concerned only with the service and materials obtained from the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped through its cooperating libraries.

(14-15 open)

1. During the past twelve months have you used any books or magazines from the library?

Yes..... 1 → (SKIP TO QUESTION 3, PAGE 2)
No..... 2

(16)

2. We are interested in finding out why some readers have stopped requesting or receiving books and magazines. If there are any problems that can be corrected, the Library would like to do so. Why haven't you used library materials in the past twelve months?

_____

_____ (17)

_____

Anything else? _____ (18)

_____

THANK RESPONDENT AND TERMINATE

(19-20 open)

The answers which readers give to questions on this questionnaire will help the Library in planning the program for the next few years. First, we'd like to know how long readers have been using the program and how they became involved in it. The next few questions will help to provide this information.

3. First, about how long have you been using the library? (READ LIST)

Less than one year.....	1	
1 - 3 years.....	2	
4 - 6 years.....	3	(21)
7 - 9 years.....	4	
10 years or more.....	5	

4. In what city and state is the regional or subregional library which you now use? 22

_____, _____
CITY STATE

23

5. How did you first hear about the free library service for the blind and physically handicapped? (DON'T READ ALTERNATIVES. CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY.)

(24-25 open)

Friend or relative.....	1	
School, library or other organization for the blind or handicapped.....	2	
Hospital, nursing home, doctor, or nurse...	3	(26)
Radio or TV.....	4	
Newspaper or magazine.....	5	
Public library.....	6	
Other (WRITE IN): _____		

6. Which of the following publications have you received by mail during the past four months? (READ LIST. CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY.)

Talking Book Topics (Recorded).....	1	
Talking Book Topics (Large print).....	2	
Braille Book Review (Braille).....	3	(27)
Braille Book Review (Large print).....	4	
Have not received any of these publications in the last four months.....	5	

Now, I'm going to ask you some questions about different types of reading equipment which you may use. Remember, the questions refer only to equipment and materials from your regional (or subregional) library.

7. Do you have any reading equipment such as talking book record players or cassette players from your regional (or subregional) library or machine lending agency?

Yes.....	1	(28)
No.....	2 → (SKIP TO QUESTION 16, PAGE 4)	

TALKING BOOK RECORD PLAYERS

8. Do you now use a talking book record player which was obtained from your regional or subregional library or machine lending agency?

Yes.....	1	(29)
No.....	2 (SKIP TO QU. 10, PAGE 3)	

9. Now I am going to read a list of things readers might find difficult in using talking book record players. For each one, please tell me how often it is a problem for you. For instance, how often is...(READ FIRST STATEMENT) a problem for you personally? Would you say "Very Often", "Sometimes", "Seldom" or "Never"?

	Very Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	
Finding the beginning of the record.....	1	2	3	4	(30)
Receiving books with missing or badly damaged records.....	1	2	3	4	(31)
Reading the record labels.....	1	2	3	4	(32)
Placing flexible discs on the record player.....	1	2	3	4	(33)

TALKING BOOK CASSETTE PLAYERS

10. Do you now use a cassette player which was obtained from a regional or subregional library or machine lending agency?

Yes..... 1 (34)
No..... 2 → (SKIP TO QUESTION 12)

11. Now I am going to read a list of things readers might find difficult in using cassette players. For each one, please tell me how often it is a problem for you personally. For instance, how often is...(READ FIRST STATEMENT) a problem for you? would you say "Very Often", "Sometimes", "Seldom" or "Never"?

(35-41 open)

	Very Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	
Operating the controls requires too much strength.....	1	2	3	4	(42)
Getting tapes tangled up in the machine.....	1	2	3	4	(43)
Receiving books with missing cassettes.....	1	2	3	4	(44)
Finding the right side (track) of the cassette.....	1	2	3	4	(45)

(46-47 open)

12. I am going to read a list of some features which people want their reading equipment, such as tape recorders, cassette players or record players, to have. As I read each feature, please tell me how important it is to you. The first one is...(READ FIRST STATEMENT). Is this feature "Very Important", "Somewhat Important", or "Not At All Important" to you?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not At All Important	
A machine that can easily be moved from place to place.....	1	2	3	(48)
A machine that turns itself off automatically at the end of a record/tape.....	1	2	3	(49)
A machine that can be played at different speeds, that is, to speed up or slow down the narrator's rate of speech.....	1	2	3	(50)
A machine that can operatre in places where a power outlet is not available. For example, in the car or outdoors.....	1	2	3	(51)

The next questions are about the narrators who record talking books. Remember, all questions refer only to the materials and services of your regional or subregional library.

13. In general, how do you feel about male and female narrators? Do you always prefer male narrators, do you always prefer female narrators, or does your preference depend on the subject?

Always prefer male narrators	1	
Always prefer female narrators	2	(52)
Preference depends on the subject	3	

14. Do you like it or dislike it when narrators use different voices for different characters?

Like it	1	
Dislike it	2	(53)
Makes no difference	3	

15a. Do you like it or dislike it when narrators use foreign or regional accents for different characters?

Like it	1	
Dislike it	2	(54)
Makes no difference	3	

15b. Some narrators themselves have accents. Do you like or dislike listening to these narrators?

Like it	1	
Dislike it	2	(55)
Makes no difference	3	(56-58 open)

The next questions are about the types of reading materials which you obtain from the regional or subregional library.

16. Which of the following statements best describes your use of braille? Are you not able to read braille at all, able to read some braille, such as cassette or record labels, or are you able to read books and magazines in braille?

Not able to read braille at all	1	
Able to read some braille	2	(59)
Able to read books and magazines in braille	3	

17. We're interested in knowing how often readers use different types of reading materials. I am going to read a list of reading materials. For each type, I would like you to tell me whether you read that type "Very Often", "Sometimes", "Seldom" or "Never".

Type of Reading Material	Very Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	
Talking books on records	1	2	3	4	(60)
Talking books on cassettes	1	2	3	4	(61)
Braille books	1	2	3	4	(62)
Magazines on records	1	2	3	4	(63)
Magazines on cassettes	1	2	3	4	(64)
Braille magazines	1	2	3	4	(65)

18a. I am now going to read some statements readers might make about ordering reading materials. For each statement, please tell me how often it is true for you personally. That is, tell me whether the statement is "Very Often", "Sometimes", "Seldom" or "Never" true for you.

	Very Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	
I like to have someone at the library select books for me.....	1	2	3	4	(66)
My orders for books or other materials are filled quickly.....	1	2	3	4	(67)
Reading materials which I order are not available.....	1	2	3	4	(68)

18b. I'm going to read a list of ways you may use to select reading materials. For each way, please tell me whether you select materials that way "Very Often", "Sometimes", "Seldom" or "Never".

(69-70 open)

	Very Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	
I select books by reading the one line descriptions on the print checklist form..	1	2	3	4	(71)
I select books by listening to most or all of the recorded Talking Books Topics.....	1	2	3	4	(72)
I select books from the large print edition of Talking Books Topics.....	1	2	3	4	(73)
I select books from the large print edition of Braille Book Review.....	1	2	3	4	(74)
I select books from the braille edition of Braille Book Review.....	1	2	3	4	(75)
I select books from the braille checklist order form.....	1	2	3	4	(76)

(77-79 open)
☐☐ 80
Card 2
Dup 1-5

19. Do you like annotations -- that is, short descriptions of what the book is about -- to be read at the beginning of recorded books?

Yes..... 1
No..... 2 (6)

20. Which of the following statements best describes your opinion about the use of strong language, such as four-letter words, in fiction books? (READ LIST)

Such language should never be used..... 1
Such language should only be used when it is important to the story..... 2 (7)
It doesn't matter to me whether strong language is used..... 3

21. Which of the following statements best describes your opinion about explicit descriptions of sex in fiction books? (READ LIST)

Such descriptions should never be included..... 1 (8)
Such descriptions should only be included when it is important to the story..... 2
It doesn't matter to me whether such descriptions are used..... 3

22. Next, we'd like to know about your reading interests. I am going to read a list of different book topics. For each topic, please tell me how important it is to have this topic available to you. Please give your opinion for each topic, even if you don't actually read that type at the present time. The first topic is...(READ TOPIC). Is (READ TOPIC) "Very Important", "Somewhat Important" or "Not At All Important" to you?

(9-22 open)

Book Topic	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not At All Important	
Animal and Wildlife	1	2	3	(23)
Biography	1	2	3	(24)
Consumer Affairs	1	2	3	(25)
Handicapped	1	2	3	(26)
Historical Fiction	1	2	3	(27)
Hobbies and Crafts	1	2	3	(28)
Literature	1	2	3	(29)
Music	1	2	3	(30)
Politics	1	2	3	(31)
Romance	1	2	3	(32)
Science	1	2	3	(33)
Self-Help	1	2	3	(34)
Travel	1	2	3	(35)

(36-40 open)

23. Would you like to have reading materials available in a language other than English?

Yes..... 1 (41)
No..... 2 → (SKIP TO QUESTION 25)

24. In what other language(s) would you like to have reading materials?

French..... 1
German..... 2
Italian..... 3 (42)
Polish..... 4
Spanish..... 5
Other (WRITE IN):

_____

_____

25. Before now, have you ever heard that you can order music materials (for example, books and scores) from the National Library Service Music Section in Washington, D.C.?

Yes..... 1 (43)
No..... 2

The next questions are about the services you receive from your regional or subregional library.

26. Overall, how would you rate the service from your regional or subregional library? Is it "Excellent", "Good", "Fair", or "Poor"?

Excellent..... 1
Good..... 2 (44)
Fair..... 3
Poor..... 4

27. Do you receive a newsletter from the library?

Yes..... 1 (45)
No..... 2 → (SKIP TO QUESTION 29a)

28. In general, how useful do you find the information in the newsletter? Is it "Very Useful", "Somewhat Useful" or "Not At All Useful"?

Very useful..... 1
Somewhat useful..... 2 (46)
Not at all useful..... 3

29a. We would like to know how readers feel about visiting the library in person, to select and return books. Do you ever visit the library in person?

Yes..... 1 (47)
No..... 2

29b. Are there any reasons why you don't visit the library, or why you don't visit the library more often? (DON'T READ ALTERNATIVES)

No problem visiting the library..... 1
The library is too far from where I live..... 2
The library is not barrier free..... 3 (48)
The library's hours are not convenient for me..... 4
Other reasons (PLEASE SPECIFY): _____
_____
_____ (49-51 open)

30. We're interested in knowing about any specific changes which can be made in the service so that it will best fill the needs of readers. We'd like to have your comments, ideas or suggestions on <u>any aspect</u> of the service: for example, reading equipment, recorded materials, braille materials, specific subject areas or types of materials you would like, services provided by your regional or subregional library, services for new readers, or anything else. Your comments and suggestions will help us to plan for services over the next few years. Do you have any comments?

Has no comments..... 1

_____
_____
_____ 52 [ ]
_____ [ ]
Anything else? _____
_____ 53
_____
_____ _____
(54-55 open)

These last questions will ask for some information about yourself. We will use this information for statistical purposes -- that is, to see if we are getting a cross-section of opinions from all types of readers. Remember that your answers to specific questions will be kept strictly confidential.

31. What was your age on your last birthday?

_____ Years (56-57)

32. At what age did you become unable to read or handle print materials?

_____ Years (58-59)

33. What kind of handicap do you have? (CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY)

Visually handicapped	1	(60)
Hearing impaired	2	
Physically handicapped	4	
Other (PLEASE SPECIFY):		

_____

34. What was the highest grade which you completed in school?

Less than eight years	1	
Grade school	2	
Some high school	3	
High school graduate	4	
Some college	5	(61)
College graduate	6	
Some graduate, professional school	7	
Completed graduate/professional school	8	
Trade/technical/vocational school (after high school)	9	

35. What is your employment status at the present time? (READ LIST)

Employed	1	(62)
Student	2	
Homemaker	3	
Retired	4	
Unemployed	5	

36. Which of the following categories best describes your annual family income? (READ LIST)

Less than $5,000	1	(63)
$5,000 - $9,999	2	
$10,000 - $14,999	3	
$15,000 - $19,999	4	
$20,000 - $29,999	5	
$30,000 or more	6	

Finally, we'd like to know a few things about your living situation. This information will help the Library in planning services for its readers. Remember that your answers will be combined with those of many other readers.

37. Do you live...

Alone	1	(64)
With family or friends	2	
At a residential school, nursing or retirement home	3	
or, Some other place (PLEASE SPECIFY):		

_____

38. I am going to read you a list of several different types of reading, and I would like you to tell me whether you have someone available to help you with it "Very Often", "Sometimes", "Seldom" or "Never".

Type of Reading	Very Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	
Personal mail, such as letters.....	1	2	3	4	(65)
Newspapers, magazines.....	1	2	3	4	(66)
Books.....	1	2	3	4	(67)

(QUESTION 39 NOT USED ON THIS VERSION) (68 open)

40. Just to be sure we are representing all groups in our survey, please tell me whether you are...

Black..... 1
White..... 2 (69)
Hispanic..... 3
or, Other racial or ethnic group (PLEASE SPECIFY):

_____

That's all my questions. Thank you very much for participating in the survey. Your answers will help the Library in planning services to meet its readers' needs during the coming years.

INTERVIEWER RECORD:

Male... 1 Female... 2 (70)

Time Interview Ended: _____AM/PM

(71-79 open)
☐ 80

APPENDIX B

NATIONAL LIBRARY SERVICE FOR THE BLIND AND PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20542

1291 Taylor Street, N.W.
Area Code 202-882-5500
TWX 710-822-1969

December, 1979

Dear Librarian:

The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped has contracted with Market Facts, Inc., a private research company, to conduct a survey of NLS users and librarians. The enclosed questionnaire has been mailed to all regional and subregional libraries. We are asking that the head librarian complete and return the questionnaire to Market Facts within one week of receiving it.

Most of the items on the questionnaire focus on your patrons, their interests, and the methods which you use to meet their needs. Many of the same issues are being covered in the users' survey, because the findings of this study should reflect both the users' and libraries' views.

In completing the questionnaire, keep the following points in mind:

- The questionnaire should be completed by the head librarian only.
- The same questionnaire is being sent to both regional and subregional librarians; some questions may be applicable to one or the other, but not both. Please mark "N/A" as appropriate.
- Although we have attempted to avoid duplication of questions which you may have been asked on other state or NLS surveys, there may be some overlap on a few issues. We ask that you answer all applicable questions.
- Please return your completed questionnaire to Market Facts within one week of receiving it, by using the enclosed postage-paid envelope.

Many of you have already assisted with pre-test aspects of the study during the past year, and your cooperation has been greatly appreciated. The findings of this study will be used by NLS to help plan responsive library services for the 1980's. This is an excellent opportunity for you to make your voice heard along with those of the other libraries and the NLS patrons. Thank you for your participation in this important study.

Sincerely,

Frank Kurt Cylke
Director

Market Facts, Inc., 100 S. Wacker Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60606

Section I. Services for Patrons

1. Below is a list of information sources through which people may first hear about the library. We would like to know which three you feel are the most frequent sources of information for your new patrons. Under the "Most Frequent Sources" column below, please "X" three boxes to show which sources of information are the three most frequent for your patrons.

Sources of Information	Most Frequent Sources	
Friend or relative	☐1	
School, library or other organization for the blind or handicapped	☐2	
Hospital, nursing home, doctor, nurse	☐3	(5)
Radio or TV	☐4	
Newspaper or magazine	☐5	
Public library	☐6	
Other (Write in): _____		

2. Below is a list of ways you may use to introduce new patrons to the service. For each way, please place an "X" in one box to show whether you use that method "Most of the Time", "Sometimes", "Seldom" or "Never". Please "X" one box for each way.

Ways to Introduce Patrons	How Often Use: Most of the Time	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	
a. Send welcoming letter	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	(6)
b. Make phone call to welcome	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	(7)
c. Make personal welcoming visit	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	(8)
d. Send information and/or catalogues by mail	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	(9)
e. Give instructions on use of machines in person	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	(10)
f. Other method (Please specify): _____					(11-12 open)

3. How do your patrons become subscribers to Braille Book Review or Talking Book Topics? Please "X" the one box which best shows how your patrons become subscribers.

New patrons' names are automatically sent to be added to the Talking Book Topics or Braille Book Review subscription lists	☐1	(13)
New patrons are asked which publication(s) they wish to receive; then their names are sent to be added to the Talking Book Topics or Braille Book Review list	☐2	

Section II. Requests for Reading Materials

4. How do your patrons make their requests for reading materials? Please "X" one box to show whether "Most", "Many", "Few" or "None" of your patrons use each method listed below. Please "X" one box for each method.

Method	How Many Patrons Use This Method: Most	Many	Few	None	
a. Order form in Talking Book Topics.....	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	(14)
b. Order form in Braille Book Review.....	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	(15)
c. Telephone call to library.....	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	(16)
d. Letter or card to library.....	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	(17)
e. Personal visit to library.....	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	(18)
f. Someone else (e.g., friend, relative, etc.) makes selection.....	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	(19)
g. Patrons request that library select materials for them.....	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	(20)

5. To what extent do you select reading materials for your patrons? Please "X" one box.

☐1 We never select materials for our patrons.....

☐2 We select reading materials for our patrons only when they request we do so..... (21)

☐3 If a patron requests reading material which is not available, we select a substitute.....

☐4 We sometimes select reading materials, based upon the patrons' interests, even if they have not requested that we do so.....

6. In general, how many days or hours does it take to fill a request from a patron? That is, assuming the book requested is available in the library, how many days or hours are there between the time you receive a request or a returned book and the time the requested book is sent out to the patron? Please write in the number of days or hours in the space below.

Approximately _____ days or (22-23)

_____ hours (24-25)

7a. In 1979, what problems have your patrons most often reported about receiving materials through the mail? Please "X" all boxes that apply.

☐1 Our patrons have not reported any problems..... → (GO TO QU. 8)

☐2 Reading materials were damaged in the mail.....

☐3 Reading materials arrived late..... (26)

☐4 Ordered materials were not received.....

Other (Write in): _____

_____ (27 open)

7b. How do your patrons report problems in receiving their materials through the mail? Please "X" all that apply.

☐1 They telephone the library.....

☐2 They write a letter..... (28)

☐3 They report problems when visiting the library.....

Other (Write in): _____

_____ (29 open)

8a. Concurrently with this survey, a survey of users of the National Library Service is being conducted. In that survey, information is being collected on patrons' reading interests. We would also like to obtain librarians' opinions of book topics. Please place an "X" in the box beside each topic which you feel more materials are needed to satisfy your patrons' reading needs and interests.

Book Topic		
Adventure	☐	1
Animal and Wildlife	☐	2
Bestsellers	☐	3
Biography	☐	4
Classics	☐	5
Consumer Affairs	☐	6
Detective and Mystery	☐	7
Handicapped	☐	8
Health	☐	9
Historical Fiction	☐	0
History	☐	X
Hobbies and Crafts	☐	R
Humor	☐	-1
Literature	☐	-2
Movies and Theatre	☐	-3
Music	☐	-4
Painting and Sculpture	☐	-5
Politics	☐	-6
Psychology	☐	-7
Romance	☐	-8
Religion	☐	-9
Science	☐	-0
Science Fiction	☐	-X
Self-Help	☐	-R
Sports	☐	--1
Travel	☐	--2
Westerns	☐	--3

(30-32)

8b. Are there any topics -- including those listed above or any others -- about which you feel more materials are being produced than are necessary to satisfy your patrons' needs and interests? Please list these topics in the space below.

_____ 33 ☐
_____ ☐
_____ ☐ 34

9a. With regard to your copy allotment, would you say that you usually receive the correct number of copies of each title? That is, do you usually receive as many copies as you request?

Yes, I usually receive the correct number of copies	☐	1 → (GO TO QU. 9c)
No, there are often discrepancies	☐	2

(35)

9b. Please explain the discrepancies.

_____ 36 ☐
_____ ☐
_____ ☐ 37

9c. During the past year, did you receive from the NLS materials which you feel were not needed? (For example, subject bibliographies, reference publications, brochures, etc.)

Yes..... ☐1
No..... ☐2 → (GO TO QU. 10) (38)

9d. Please explain.

_____ 39
_____ ☐
_____ ☐ 40

10. Do your patrons identify defective materials in any way before returning them to you? Please "X" one box.

Yes, defective materials are almost always marked by the patron..... ☐1

Yes, defective materials are sometimes marked by the patron..... ☐2 (41)

No, defective materials are seldom marked by the patron..... ☐3 → (GO TO QU. 12a)

11. How do patrons usually identify defective materials before returning them to you? For each way patrons may use to mark defective materials, please "X" one box to show how often this way is used.

Way of Marking Defective Materials	How Often Is This Way Used: Frequently	Occasionally	Seldom	Never	
a. Tying a string to the outside of the mailing container.....	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	(42)
b. Tying a string to the disc/cassette before placing it in the container.....	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	(43)
c. Enclosing a note inside the mailing container.....	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	(44)
d. Marking/writing on the outside of the mailing container.....	☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	(45)

e. Other methods (Please describe)

_____ (46-47)
_____
_____
_____

12a. Do you usually inspect reading materials for defects?

Yes..... ☐1
No..... ☐2 → (GO TO QU. 12f) (48)

12b. How do you usually inspect discs for defects? Please "X" all that apply.

Open a sample of containers and visually inspect these discs..... ☐1

Open all containers and visually inspect each disc..... ☐2 (49)

Clean all discs..... ☐3

Other (Please describe): _____

_____ (50 open)

12c. How do you usually inspect cassettes for defects? Please "X" all that apply.

Open a sample of containers and visually inspect these cassettes..... ☐1

Open all containers and visually inspect each cassette..... ☐2 (51)

Rewind all cassettes that require rewinding..... ☐3

Other (Please describe): _____

_____

12d. When do you inspect reading materials?

Before circulating..... ☐1

As they are returned from circulation..... ☐2 (52)

Some other time (Please describe): _____

_____

12e. What are the most frequent problems you find when inspecting reading materials that have already been circulated? Please "X" as many boxes as apply.

Missing labels..... ☐1

Missing records or cassettes..... ☐2

Tape spill..... ☐3 (53)

Broken records..... ☐4

Scratched records..... ☐5

Tapes that are not rewound..... ☐6

Other (Please describe): _____

_____ (54 open)

12f. What percentage of the reading materials are returned defective? For each category listed below, please estimate what percentage of the defective materials have that problem.

Missing labels..... _____% (55-57)

Missing records or cassettes..... _____% (58-60)

Tape spill..... _____% (61-63)

Broken records..... _____% (64-66)

Scratched records..... _____% (67-69)

Tapes that are not rewound..... _____% (70-72)

Other (Please describe):

_____ _____% (73-75 open)

(76-79 open)

☐☐ 80

Card 2
Dup 1-4

Section III. Patron Characteristics and Behavior

13a. To the best of your knowledge, approximately what percentage of the patrons in your active reader files are living in an institution, such as a residential school, hospital, nursing or convalescent home? (Please include only those readers who are served as individuals and who have obtained their own machine(s) or braille materials from you. This does not refer to other readers who may be using deposit collections at such institutions.)

Approximately _____% of our patrons served as individuals live in institutions. (5-7)

13b. What special procedures do you follow when serving institutionalized patrons?

- We follow no special procedures..... ☐1
- Deliver materials by mail..... ☐2
- Deliver materials personally..... ☐3 (8)
- Set up a deposit collection..... ☐4
- Circulate materials directly to individuals ☐5
- Other (Please describe): _____

_____ (9 open)

14a. Approximately what percentage of your active patrons have temporary disabilities?

Approximately _____% of our active patrons have temporary difficulties (10-12)

14b. How do you provide reading materials to persons with temporary difficulties?

- Circulate material through the mail..... ☐1
- Deliver materials personally..... ☐2 (13)
- Circulate material through hospitals or institutions. ☐3
- Other (Please describe): _____

_____

14c. What special activities do you carry out that are designed to locate and serve patrons with temporary disabilities?

- Radio spots..... ☐1
- Newspaper articles..... ☐2
- Newsletters..... ☐3 (14)
- Talks with groups serving these people..... ☐4
- Other (Please describe): _____

_____

15a. From your records are you able to determine what percentage of your patrons have specific types of handicaps?

Yes..... ☐1
No..... ☐2 → (GO TO QU. 16a) (15)

15b. Please indicate the percentage of your patrons who are in each category below. If you are not able to provide a percentage for a category, please place an "X" in the "Not Available" box to the right of the category.

Type of Handicap	% of Patrons	Not Available	
Legally blind only	_____%	☐999	(16-18)
Physically handicapped only	_____%	☐999	(19-21)
Visual handicap (not legally blind)	_____%	☐999	(22-24)
Other physical handicap	_____%	☐999	(25-27)
Multiple handicapped	_____%	☐999	(28-30)
Learning disabled	_____%	☐999	(31-33)

16a. What special activities do you carry out that are designed to locate and serve patrons with physical handicaps?

Radio spots..... ☐1
Newspaper articles..... ☐2
Newsletters..... ☐3 (34)
Talks with groups serving these people..... ☐4
Other (Please describe): _____
_____

16b. What special activities do you carry out that are designed to locate and serve patrons with learning disabilities?

Radio spots..... ☐1
Newspaper articles..... ☐2
Newsletters..... ☐3 (35)
Talks with groups serving these people..... ☐4
Other (Please describe): _____
_____

17a. In an average week, approximately how many of your patrons, or persons representing patrons, make a personal visit to the library?

Less than 2 patrons..... ☐1
2-5 patrons..... ☐2
6-10 patrons..... ☐3 (36)
11-15 patrons..... ☐4
16-20 patrons..... ☐5
More than 20 patrons..... ☐6

17b. Why do you feel patrons do not visit the library more often? Please "X" as many boxes as apply.

Library is too far from patron's home..... ☐1
Library is not barrier free..... ☐2
Transportation problems..... ☐3 (37)
Postal service is adequate..... ☐4
No browsing collection is available..... ☐5
Other (Please describe): _____
_____ (38 open)
_____

18. Finally, are there any major continuing problems which your patrons report to you? For each area listed below, please list problems which seem to be experienced by a significant number of your patrons. If there have been no significant problems, please "X" the box directly below each program area.

Program Area

a. Reading equipment (machines)

☐1 No significant problems (39-40)

_____
_____
_____
_____

b. Book selection

☐1 No significant problems (41-42)

_____
_____
_____
_____

c. Technical and other problems with discs, cassettes, braille

☐1 No significant problems (43-44)

_____
_____
_____
_____

d. Network library services

☐1 No significant problems (45-46)

_____
_____
_____
_____

e. Any other significant problems reported by patrons?

☐1 No significant problems (47-48)

_____
_____
_____
_____

(49-79 open)
☐ 80

Thank you very much for participating in the survey. Your answers will help us in planning to meet our patrons' needs over the next several years.

Please return the questionnaire as soon as possible in the enclosed postage paid envelope.

APPENDIX C

DATA WEIGHTING PROCEDURE

The weighting scheme used for the Braille subsample is designed to recreate the proportion that Clovernook and Braille Book Review each have of the population of readers who are users of the NLS system. By weighting the data, analysis may be made of the Braille population as a whole, as each subsample will then represent its proper proportion of the total.

The Braille reader population is 19,441 of which Clovernook has 11,378 names or 58.5% of the names and Braille Book Review has 8,063 names for 41.5% of the total. When the sample was drawn for the User's survey, a greater proportion of names were drawn from the Clovernook list than are represented in the total Braille population, while the sample of the BBR list underepresented its total. The proportion of returned questionnaires also shows the disproportionate sampling.

To redistribute the sample proportions into their proper relationships, each subsample must be assigned a weight. This weight is obtained by dividing the actual percent a subsample represents of the total population by the percent of returned questionnaires. These weights must then be multiplied by the actual frequencies on the data tape. The two samples may now be combined for analysis. Table-I shows the weights assigned to each subsample.

TABLE I

	Braille Readers		User's Survey Sample Size		Returned Questionnaire*		Weight
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Clovernook	11,378	58.5	1,509	74.7	632	77.0	.76
Braille Book Review (NLS)	8,063	41.5	511	25.3	189	23.0	1.8
Total:	19,441	100%	2,020	100%	821	100%	

*Returned questionnaire proportion divided by proportion of total population.